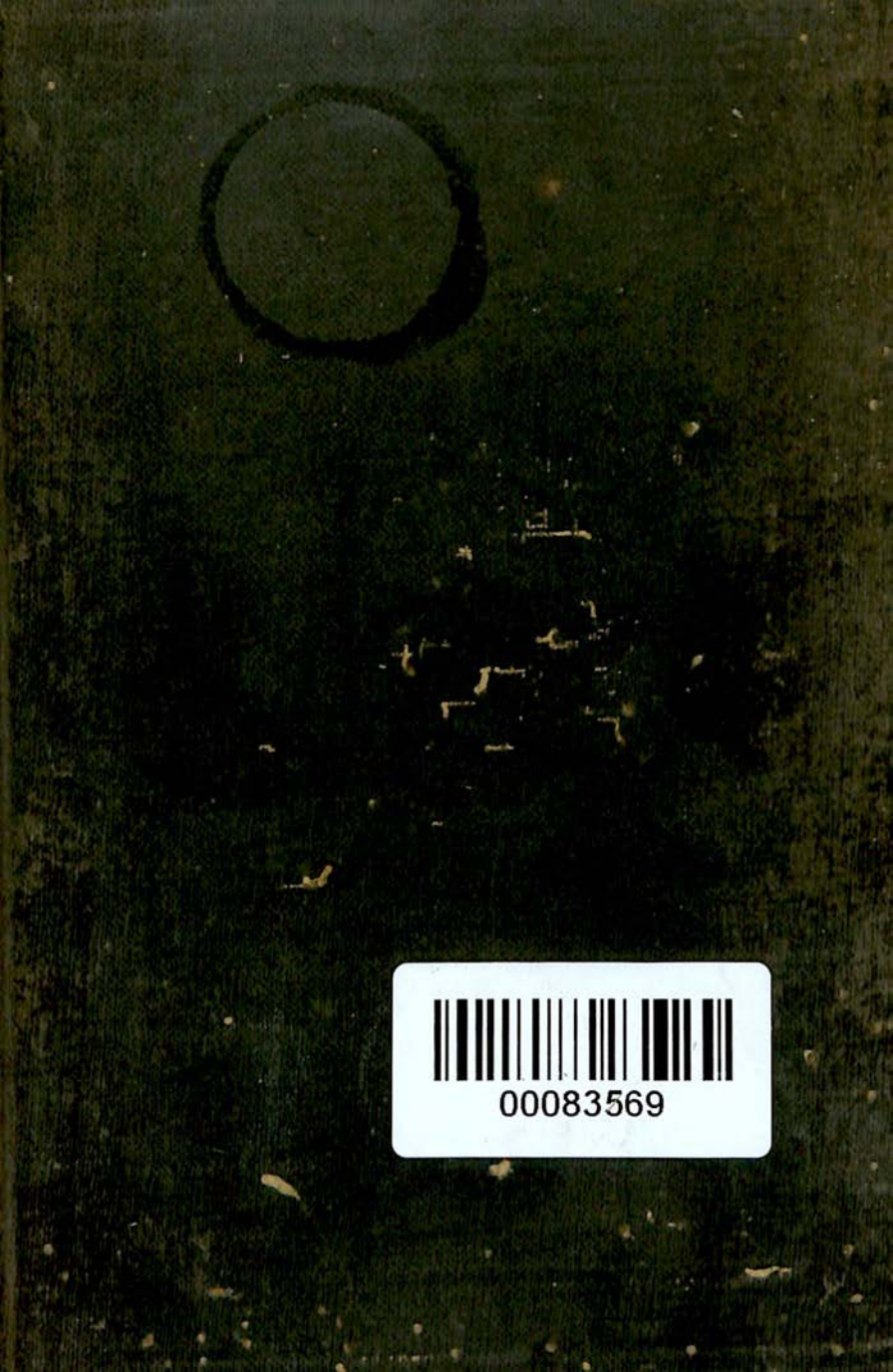
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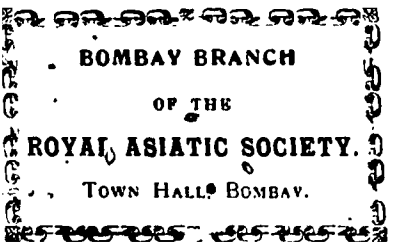

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THE CITY OF MUSCAT.

THROUGH ASIATIC TURKEY.

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY

FROM

BOMBAY TO THE BOSPHORUS.

BY

GRATTAN GEARY,

EDITOR OF "THE TIMES OF INDIA."

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,

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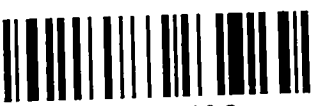
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ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, BART., G.C.S.I.,

GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY,

THIS BOOK IS, BY PERMISSION,

Respectfully Dedicated.

PREFACE.

In writing the following pages it has been my endeavour to set down, with entire impartiality, what came under my observation during a long journey across Asiatic Turkey. I have not glossed over what told against the Turks, or suppressed what was in their favour; and I have carefully avoided exaggeration. Whether in the result the balance inclines for, or against, Turkey, it is for the reader to decide. As the country appeared to me I have described it, being anxious only to convey to others the exact impression made upon my mind at the time.

It was my good fortune to come in contact with men of all classes, and, I may almost say, of all races, during the three months which the journey lasted, and I endeavoured to profit by the circumstance. It was an advantage to hear the opinions, not only of Pashas and great officers of state, but of bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, and even peasants and private soldiers—to say nothing of the consular agents and the representatives of European Powers. I did my best to sift their varied, and often conflicting, testimony, and arrive at some reasonable conclusion as to the real drift of things in the Ottoman Empire. The views and feelings of Arabs and Jews, Greeks and Kurds, will be found in these

volumes, as well as the opinions of Turkish statesmen, some of whom bear names known throughout Europe.

The earlier chapters of the first volume are devoted mainly to the Persian Gulf, and to Persia. In the Gulf—until recently the haunt of piracy—order has been established, and commerce flourishes, the influence of England being paramount throughout its whole extent. Persia is gradually succumbing to the influence of another Power. In the words of an Arab, she says to Russia, "I am not strong enough to fight you, so give your orders!" Behind the Turkish Question a Persian Question looms in the near future. That is my apology for devoting some space to Persia and the Persians, in a book treating mainly of Asiatic Turkey.

It may not be deemed foreign to the purpose, that I have given in the second volume an account of the interview between the Sultan's Envoy and the Ameer of Cabul. The chief object of this book is, after all, to contribute, however humbly, to the right understanding of some of the elements of that nexus of problems which is called the Eastern Question.

To those who, whether Europeans or Ottomans, officials, or non-officials, so kindly aided me on my journey, or favoured me with valuable information and useful suggestions after it, I beg to offer here my heartfelt acknowledgments.

G. G.

LONDON, *November*, 1878.

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EGYPT
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BOMBAY
Route from
BOMBAY TO THE BOSPHORUS
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THROUGH ASIATIC TURKEY.

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY FROM BOMBAY TO THE BOSPHORUS.

CHAPTER I.

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Object of the journey—Probable difficulties of the route—Set out in the spring—The Impedimenta—The British India Company's steamer Pachumba—Kurrachee—Its characteristics—The Scinde railway—The Euphrates Valley Railway project and Kurrachee—A Bombay merchant and his family on a pilgrimage—A French traveller—Through Persia and Russia to Northern Europe—Present superiority of that route over that through Turkey.

On the 14th March, 1878, I left Bombay for the Persian Gulf, to carry out an intention, formed two years before, of making my way to Europe from the head of the Gulf to the Bosphorus, and seeing for myself the actual condition of things in the Sultan's Asiatic dominions. When I first decided that this should be my route homewards, Turkey was still at peace. The nomad Arabs were kept more or less on their good behaviour by the presence of the regular troops in garrison at Bussorah, Baghdad, Kerbella, and Nejef, and the Kurds

in the north were overawed by the garrisons of Mosul, Nisibin, Mardin, and Diarbekir. I was informed at that time by men who knew the country, that with ordinary precautions the journey could be made without danger of anything worse befalling the traveller than being attacked by robbers, and that if nothing valuable were taken, the loss incurred might be practically confined to the clothes on one's back. The risk to be run was not, I was assured, at all comparable to that to be faced on a tour through Sicily or Calabria. But during the last year things greatly changed for the worse. The Porte was forced by the exigencies of a disastrous war to call in all its garrisons from the towns controlling the Arabs and Kurds, and the nomads had become very much their own masters. They did not "put themselves in insurrection," but they were insubordinate, and did what seemed right in their own eyes. They fought among themselves in some districts, and in others they pillaged the defenceless villagers occasionally, and they robbed caravans on the high roads very often. A general sense of insecurity was diffused by the restlessness of the nomads, and the knowledge that the means of repression possessed by the local authorities were of the slightest. Under these circumstances it seemed somewhat problematical whether a European could succeed in making his way from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean.

But it seemed to me that the attempt was worth making. There was even some advantage in seeing the country when the nomads, set free for the moment

from governmental coercion, were able to show themselves as nature and the habits of ages had made them. It would be easier, under such circumstances, to judge of their tendencies, and of the chances of their attaining within some reasonable time to a higher state of civilization. Influenced by this consideration, I ventured to disregard the counsels of officials and others, to put off my journey until the return of the Ottoman troops from the seat of war gave some prospect of order and security along the more exposed portions of the route.

I set out from Bombay in the middle of March, so as to arrive in Mesopotamia after the winter rains were over, and before the freshness of spring had given place to the oppressive heat of the early summer.

As the principal part of the journey was to be made on horseback, it was necessary to keep the baggage within the smallest possible compass. I endeavoured to keep the weight down to forty pounds, and I ultimately succeeded. I packed everything really essential in two canvas bags. I had half a dozen changes of underclothing, some of which were woollen, for the colder climate of the northern portion of the journey; two coats, which I subsequently found it necessary to wear one over the other, to withstand the rays of the sun by day, and the heavy dews by night; an overcoat, riding breeches, and a pair of racing spurs. These latter I afterwards found to be too light to make an impression on the tough sides of Turkish post-horses; a pair of

heavy cavalry spurs would have been much more useful. I took with me an ordinary English saddle, which I had thoroughly overhauled, and supplied particularly with stout stirrup-leathers and new girths. With the saddle I took strong English reins and a chifney bit. I knew that, as a rule, it would be necessary to sleep in the open air, but a tent was not to be thought of. I provided myself with a pair of blankets, a resai—an Indian covering made with layers of cotton-wool between gaily-coloured sheets of calico—and by way of a bed, a calico bag, six feet long and three feet wide, to be filled nightly with the chopped straw on which the horses in Turkey are fed during the greater portion of the year. As it happened, the chopped straw was out of season when I got to Turkey, and my bed-bag was filled but twice during the whole journey. However, it served me as a sheet. The rest of my impedimenta was composed of half a dozen books, and some tins of preserved soup and vegetables. For defence I had a Colt's army revolver and a derringer—a small and handy pocket-pistol, better known in America than in the East. For head covering I wore an ordinary Indian sun-helmet (when I started), but at Kurrachee I changed this for a lighter pith helmet. When supplemented by an Arab kaftieh—a coloured handkerchief of silk and cotton, about a yard square—this head covering is a very good protection from the rays of the sun and the sharp particles of sand with which the wind in the desert is generally laden.

I left Bombay on board the British India Company's

steamer Pachumba. The British India steamers carry Indian mails to the Persian Gulf and Bussorah, but they are not noted for their speed. They stop at several ports on the way to discharge and take in cargo, and they rarely reach the head of the Gulf under sixteen or eighteen days. The Pachumba, a vessel of 800 tons, is one of the newer boats of the line, and she was specially designed for navigating tropical seas. Her main deck can be made as free to the air as her upper deck by the removal of the iron shutters which close it in when the weather is rough, and her spacious upper deck is covered from end to end with awning. The 900 passengers she is licensed to carry may therefore be very comfortable on either deck, there being plenty of air and the minimum of sun on both.

Kurrachee, the first port of call after leaving Bombay, was reached on the 17th March. It has not yet attained the predicted glory which Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, said he would long to come back to the earth to behold. But though it is not as flourishing as it may one day become, it is worth seeing. It is the last port under British rule which we see in these waters, and, undeveloped as it is, how vast the difference between it and the Arab, and Persian, and Turkish ports which the Pachumba shall henceforth visit in the course of her voyage! There are wharves, and broad streets, and well-made roads; there are wheeled vehicles—the last I shall see for months—and besides the many roads there is a railway. It is a civilized town, clean and well-kept, and efficiently policed.

If situated in the Gulf, and owing allegiance to Shah or Sultan, Kurrachee would be regarded as a heaven-built city. But it is not in itself a very cheerful place. The climate is indeed better than that of Bombay, the heat being less oppressive, and the "cold weather" being really cold and bracing. But the air is often yellow with fine dust from the hills of Beloochistan. The country round is arid and uninviting. The roads are wide, and straight, and long; but the traffic over them is inconsiderable. The camp where Europeans live is six miles from the landing-stage, so that the distances are discouraging. The native town is built substantially of mud, which resists rain, and sun, and wind wonderfully, but it does not look cheerful. Camels are in the streets; dust and glare and a desert stillness are over all. Few ships are in the harbour; and in the town there is no bustle—no cotton-mills, no life. There is a big court-house, which forms a feature in the flat, depressing landscape. No vegetation grows on the soil, which is pickled with salt to keep it wholesome. Old citizens tell me that the place is very healthy and far less injurious to the European liver than Bombay. These old residents have not the courage to deny that at its first aspect Kurrachee is rather unprepossessing; but they maintain that in a few weeks one gets to like the monotony of the landscape, and the air, murky with desert sand, ceases to attract attention. It is admitted, however, that up-country, in Scinde untempered by the sea, things are very dismal indeed; and in the hot weather the heat is so unrelenting that people quartered there become—as

I heard it expressed by a witty member of the local bar, —"prematurely insane."

On the whole, however, Kurrachee is a rising place. During the last twenty years considerable improvements of one kind or another have been effected. The arid appearance of the surrounding country is due to that scantiness of the rainfall to which the climate owes its salubrious freedom from excessive moisture. Instead of a fall of eighty inches, as in Bombay, Kurrachee only gets six inches in the twelvemonth; in 1877 the rainfall was but three inches. Though no vegetation is visible over the vast sandy plain on the edge of which the city is built, there is no want of vegetables in the markets of the city, which are well supplied from the country higher up, irrigated by the Indus.

For fruit Kurrachee is dependent on Bombay, the weekly steamer bringing a small supply. The cost of living is much less than in the great southern city, and rents are reasonable. The supply of water is bad; and there is no gas. During the thirty-six hours that the Pachumba remained at anchor in the port, I visited the sights of the place.[1] What struck me as best worth seeing were the extensive workshops of the Scinde Railway Company. Five engines were being built there at the time; the boilers and wheels were imported from England, but everything else was made on the premises by Sindi workmen, mostly Mussulmans. A good deal of work was also in hand for the Indus Valley State Railway. This railway begins at Hyderabad, whither

[1] See Appendix A.

a hundred and five miles of the Scinde railway takes the traveller. From Hyderabad the state railway, when it is finished, will take him 500 miles, when he will get once more into the Scinde railway carriage, and be carried on to Delhi, if he desires to go so far. The inconvenience of having 500 miles of a State railway interpolated, as it were, between two sections of the Scinde railway is obvious. There is some idea of effecting an exchange, which will give the company an unbroken length of line to work, and deliver the government railway department from the embarrassment sure to arise from having no proper terminus at either end of its own line. The wisdom of coming to some arrangement of the kind cannot well be doubted. When the Indus Valley line is completed, Kurrachee will be the port of a large tract of country which has now practically no outlet, and its commercial importance will be greatly enhanced. It is the dream of men, not given wholly to "dreaming dreams," that the railway along the Euphrates or the Tigris Valley will, when constructed, be prolonged down the Persian shore of the Gulf, and between the mountains of Beloochistan and the sea as far as Kurrachee. Here it will join the Indian railway system, by this Indus Valley line, and London will thus be brought nearer to Calcutta than it was once to Edinburgh.

At Kurrachee a well-known Mussulman merchant, with his son-in-law and nephew, and their wives, came on board to proceed up the Gulf on a pilgrimage to Kerbella, the scene of the martyrdom of Hussein, a

grandson of the prophet. The blithe and handsome Moslem ladies of the party wore the usual native dress, but remained quite unveiled until they left British and entered Turkish waters; then they covered their faces with hideous black veils, such as the Moslem ladies of Baghdad wear. Some Arabs, bound for Baghdad, had come up in the Pachumba from Bombay, but of European passengers going further than Kurrachee there were only two, myself and Captain Albert Jourdan, late commandant of the French Military Mission to Japan.

Captain Jourdan, a descendant of the hero of Fleurus, was a very experienced traveller. He was proceeding to Europe by the route through Persia, intending to cross the Caspian to Baku; thence to make the best of his way to Tiflis, where he would take the train to Poti on the Black Sea, which he could cross in a Russian steamer, and then go up the Don, and taking the train to St. Petersburg, ultimately reach France *viâ* Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and England. It would be difficult to imagine a route from Japan to France more full of variety and interest. Thanks to the comparative shortness of the Persian route, and to the completeness of the Russian railway system, Captain Jourdan had no doubt traversed the more civilized portions of the Russian empire, and all northern Europe, and settled down in Paris before I was well out of Asiatic Turkey. The route through Persia from Bushire to the Caspian is both shorter and safer than that from Bussorah *viâ* Baghdad, to either Scanderoon or Trebizonde. Never-

theless I declined Captain Jourdan's pressing invitation to change my programme and accompany him through the dominions of the Shah, because I particularly desired to see for myself the actual condition of those of the Sultan.

CHAPTER II.

MUSCAT.

Across the Sea of Oman to Muscat—The rock-bound harbour—The town and its narrow streets—Absence of beasts of burden and of carts—Large trade—Mixed population—British Resident—His highness the Sayyid—Household arrangements—The Bazaars—Arab swordsmen—Abyssinians—Beloochee mercenaries—His highness's army—The Politics of Oman—The gunboat and the Arabs—Visit to Sayyid Toorki—The lion at the palace gate—The royal staircase—His Highness on the Eastern Question—Inspection of Fort Mirani—How the Portuguese lost Muscat—The Worshipper of the Cow and his gentle daughter—The governor's love and unbounded simplicity—Fort Jalali—The Sayyid's early vicissitudes and present melancholy—The climate of Muscat.

We left Kurrachee on the evening of the 18th March, and steaming across the Sea of Oman to the Arabian coast, arrived off Muscat, the capital of the Arabian kingdom of Oman, on the morning of the 21st, at six o'clock.

The little town of Muttra, situated on the coast about a mile and a half to the west of Muscat, is visible before anything can be seen of the capital itself. The cove of Muscat is entered from the north, and until the steamer rounds the point of the Gibraltar-like rock which forms one of the sides of the harbour, it is difficult to

imagine that there is a considerable city hidden somewhere in the midst of the inhospitable cliffs. The rugged volcanic hills which surround the little harbour are as bare of vegetation as Aden itself. They are four or five hundred feet high, of irregular outline, and quite precipitous. Two imposing forts occupy opposite points commanding the harbour and the town, and along the heights at intervals are towers of unusual height. The place could be easily made impregnable; but the harbour is not large, being little more than a quarter of a mile from east to west, and less than half a mile from north to south. It is completely open to the north. During the north-west monsoon the sea comes in with great fury, and though the anchorage is good, the bottom rising gradually towards the rocky shore, ships usually prefer to clear out rather than try the strength of their cables. There is a depth of from fifteen to thirty fathoms throughout, and the harbour is perfectly sheltered from every wind except that from the north or north-west. The amphitheatre of hills which gives this shelter on three sides, allows a cramped space at the head of the harbour for the town of Muscat.

The town is surrounded on the land side by a wall, strengthened with eight towers. The houses are built as close to one another as it is possible for them to be; there is not a street both sides of which you may not touch with the hands as you walk along. Outside the town there are suburbs, built of sticks and mats, in which Beloochees principally reside, and there the streets

are not quite so narrow. But during the whole of my wanderings through this city of Muscat I saw neither horse, nor camel, nor mule, nor ass, and, of course, no cart of any kind. It would be impossible for four-footed animals, larger than dogs or cats, to move through the streets; there is scarcely room for two men to pass one another without jostling.

Nevertheless, Muscat is a place of importance, and possesses a considerable trade. The city population, estimated at 40,000, is perhaps as mixed as that of any of the ports in these seas. Besides the Arabs, there are numbers of Banians from Western India, of Beloochees from Mekran, of Abyssinians, Somalies, Nubians, and Persians. Of Europeans residing in the town there are two. It was an historical event when Captain Jourdan and myself landed, and doubled the European element for a whole day. The permanent British residents are the Political Agent, Colonel Miles, and Mr. Maguire, a merchant in a large way of business, the agent of the British India Company. Of course we visited both, and were most cordially welcomed. To Mr. Maguire, who is a very skilful amateur photographer, I was indebted for the photograph of Muscat, from which the engraving forming the frontispiece to the present volume has been taken. It is a very characteristic view. The large building on the left is the British Residency; in the centre is the Custom House; and on the right is Fort Mirani, of which more anon. Intimation of our arrival was sent to his Highness Sayyid Toorki, the Sovereign of Oman—usually, but erroneously, styled by

Europeans the "Imam of Muscat." His Highness very courteously said he would be happy to give us an audience at four o'clock, and sent word to the commandants of the forts to allow us to go over them. Meanwhile, we noted the architecture of the place, and went through the bazaars. The houses are somewhat Saracenic in general style. They have all two floors, and some even three. The walls of the upper rooms are divided into innumerable openings by long, narrow windows, so that air may come freely in from all quarters. No one lives on the ground-floors, which are used as lumber or store-rooms. The roofs form the bed-chambers; no one can sleep in-doors during the hot weather on account of the stifling heat. When the shumal, or hot wind from the desert, blows, the sleepers are during the night watered, like plants, with a watering-pot. This practice may account for the fact that muscular rheumatism is by no means unknown in Muscat.

The bazaars are different from anything of the sort I had seen in India. All the business streets are roofed in at a height of some eighteen or twenty feet. Poles or beams go from side to side—they need not be long to span the distance—and on them are placed layers of mats, which are plastered over with three or four inches of stiff mud. By this means the fierce heat of the sun is effectually kept out. Every twenty or thirty yards a hole is broken through the hard mud and the matting to let in a little light; darkness is thus made visible. The general effect is that of rows of shops, or rather of

stalls, in subterranean passages. The smell is sometimes heavy, but, strangely enough, the ventilation appears on the whole to be very fair. Doubtless, the great heat of the atmosphere above the close roofing insures an upward current through the light-hole. The city is tolerably clean throughout, far cleaner than any of the other cities we shall see before arriving in Europe. The dry-earth system is thoroughly understood in this Arabian capital; earth and ashes play a great part in keeping Muscat comparatively sweet and wholesome.

The goods on sale were the usual stock of Oriental bazaars. Manchester prints caught the eye at every turn. At one shop, padlocks made in Bombay were sold at two annas (threepence) each: they were coarsely put together, but strong and serviceable. Muscat is famous for its halwa, a compound of sugar, ghee, or clarified butter, and the gluten of sesame. It is usually supposed to be made of the milk of the camel; but that is a popular error. The halwa of Muscat is very different indeed from that which is sold in Bombay. It is quite palatable, and it is said to be highly nutritious and very fattening. Dates are to be seen at every stall. Fruit and vegetables, from the cultivated spots in the interior, are abundant. The population is evidently well fed, and the traders generally have a comfortable, well-to-do air. We saw no beggars and no squalor. The bazaars were thronged with Bedouins fresh from the desert, who had left their camels and horses at Muttra, and come round by boat to Muscat, the narrow and tortuous defile between Muttra and the capital being almost impassable

for animals. They were all armed to the teeth. Many had long, old-fashioned guns, highly ornamented, and all wore daggers or pistols in their girdles. A favourite weapon is a straight, broad, two-handed sword, the sweep of which would take off a man's thigh, or even cut him in two at the waist. The swordsmen carried over their shoulders small round shields of rhinoceros hide, eight or nine inches in diameter. The Arabs of these parts are very formidable swordsmen.

Half a century ago, a small number of the Beni Bou Ali being attacked by Captain, afterwards better known in England as Colonel Perronet Thompson, at the head of 350 British troops, rushed upon their badly-advised assailants, and cut down a couple of hundred of them in the twinkling of an eye. This led to a regular expedition of nearly 3000 men being sent against the tribe from Bombay. The Beni Bou Ali numbered scarcely a third of the avenging force, but they charged as before, sword in hand, and seemed to have a strong conviction that they ought to be again victorious. They were, however, defeated, and a number of prisoners were taken to Bombay. Mountstuart Elphinstone treated them very well, and sent them back to their own country, much to their surprise, for they imagined they would be all put to death by the infidels. Of course, the formidable swords of these lithe and active children of the desert will never again contest the victory with British bayonets, for the old Brown Bess has been superseded by a weapon which no swordsman can approach, but the skill and intrepidity of the Arabs of Oman are the same as ever. The perpetual feuds

between the tribes keep the warlike virtues of the Arabs undimmed by time. Most of the Arabs we met in our visit to the bazaar were at least five feet ten inches in height; all were well formed and muscular, but so free from superfluous flesh, that they looked meagre and bony. The athletic negroes who do the rough work of the place, have the advantage of them in size and plumpness, and perhaps in muscular strength. The handsomer Abyssinians are manifestly inferior to them in energy and physical endurance. The Beloochees are a fine race, nearly as tall as the Arabs, and there is more flesh on their bones. They have a good-humoured smile, which contrasts pleasantly with the Arab gravity and taciturn air.

The troops of his Highness the Sayyid are composed of Arab and Beloochee mercenaries. The Beloochees are alone to be depended on in the struggles against pretenders or rebels, which the sovereign has almost always on hand. The Beloochees know nothing of the political factions which distract Oman, and they naturally obey the orders of the prince who gives them their pay. It is not so with the Arabs, who change sides with a facility which must be a source of considerable anxiety to the sovereign of the moment. The state troops are not drilled or armed on the European model. The long gun, the sword, and spear, appear to be the weapons most in use. Of drill there is evidently none. The Arabs wear the costume of the country, and unsoldier-like ringlets hang down their lank cheeks. There is nothing of the military swagger in their gait; they

lounge along as if they suffered sadly from idleness and growing melancholy. The Beloochees are more alert in their air, but they are not a bit more soldierly. Doubtless, Sayyid Toorki knows his own business best, but it strikes one forcibly that if he put his troops through a course of military training, gave them smart uniforms, and armed them with modern weapons of precision, there would be better order in Oman, trade would flourish more, and his Highness's revenues would be considerably augmented.

The kingdom of Oman is about as large as that of England, and although it is not in all parts quite so fertile and productive, it boasts of many tracts which are well watered and fruitful. Its people have a certain turn for agriculture and trade. They have also some political cohesion, the best proof of which is to be found in the fact that Oman has preserved a sort of rude independence under its Imams from the eighth century until now, successfully resisting the efforts of the Persians on the one side, and the neighbouring Arabs on the other, to bring it into subjection. With a little vigour on the part of the central authority the predatory tribes could be kept in awe, and the incessant revolts of the local governors—for the most part "Sayyids," or princes of the prolific reigning house—put down with a strong hand. The British resident gives all the moral support possible to his Highness, and sometimes summons to his aid one of the British gunboats in these seas, and in that way some brief intervals of order are secured. Not very long since her Majesty's gunboat Teazer, lying in the harbour,

was called upon to fire over the town at a crowd of Bedouins who had insolently taken up a position beyond the line of hills to the south, in the hope of finding their way into Muscat and sacking it. The shells created a great moral effect, the Arabs never having seen such missiles before. They said the shells had eyes and could see where to fall. They could not understand how otherwise the shells could come right into their midst, as they were of course out of the view of the gunners on board the Teazer, the hills intervening. The fire was really directed by signals from an old Portuguese tower on the summit of one of the hills. A shell fell in a field, and did not explode. It was immediately surrounded by a number of excited Bedouins, who determined at once to put out the "eye"—the copper percussion fuse—by which it guided its course. They struck the "eye" with their lances; the shell exploded, and eleven Bedouins were killed on the spot. Of course the marauders ultimately decamped. The support which the British power gives to the Sayyid is, however, of necessity confined to such diplomatic and naval assistance as can be rendered to him in his conflicts with enemies showing themselves near the coast. If his Highness wishes to protect his kingdom from troubles arising in other quarters he must reorganize his little army, and make himself formidable to all aggressors. As it is the country is declining, owing to a general feeling of insecurity which checks trade. The imports of Oman amount to about 300,000*l.* a year; the exports are considerably greater, amounting to 1,100,000*l.* Dates and cotton fabrics, fruits and

fish, are the principal articles of export. With settled order, commerce would again flourish, as it has from time to time flourished whenever a ruler of exceptional vigour has borne sway at Muscat.

Having made the round of the bazaars we proceeded to his Highness the Sayyid's palace, accompanied by a very intelligent Arab interpreter provided for us by Mr. Maguire. After going up and down a number of narrow streets, or rather lanes, for there is not a genuine street in all Muscat, we entered one differing in nothing from the others, in which was a crowd of armed men, Arabs and Beloochees, his Highness's body-guard. The interpreter stopped at a ponderous gate, close shut, and told us that was the entrance to the palace. He knocked, and a little wicket was opened; he spoke a few words, and we were invited to enter through a small doorway in the great gate. We found ourselves in a sort of court-yard, around which was built the palace, a very unpretentious, two-storied edifice. To our left, close to the gateway, was a good-sized room, in which reclined a splendid African lion; the front of the lion's parlour was formed of iron bars similar to those which protect the plate-glass of jewellers' shops in London at night. The royal brute looked at the strangers with considerable curiosity. We returned his gaze, wondering what his particular duty at the palace gate was. Doubtless he is there to strike awe into the souls of people who may seek an interview with the sovereign, so that they may go into the presence duly impressed with an idea of his Highness's power. In the centre of the court-yard a

leopard occupied a cage; on our right were eight or ten Arab mares, some of which were evidently of considerable value, and the horse-keepers lay about on the pavement.

In a few minutes an intimation was sent that his Highness was ready to receive us, and we were invited to go forward. We were conducted to the foot of a large ladder with a hand-rail, and we ascended. When we got to the top we found ourselves in a sort of ante-chamber with whitewashed walls, in which some half a dozen Arabs were standing about. One of the simplest of these Arabs advanced towards us and held out his hand; unlike the rest he had no turban; he wore a small, white skull-cap, and was very plainly dressed. This was his Highness himself. We shook hands, and he very politely ushered us into the next room, the hall of audience. It was a plain apartment, with the long, narrow windows characteristic of Muscat; the walls white and unadorned; the furniture plain to a degree. A few cane-bottomed chairs were ranged on one side of the room, and in front of them was a small carpet. His Highness motioned us to sit on the chairs, and then he sat down on a sofa a little apart; he had no carpet in front of him; he put his sandalled feet on a small bed about four feet long by three feet wide, and made of common bed-ticking—a most unprincely footstool.

His Highness is apparently about thirty-five years of age, and is tall and spare, like most Arabs. His handsome countenance wears an expression of melancholy; he is grave and dignified, but perfectly simple and unassuming in manner. The conversation began by an

expression of satisfaction on the part of his Highness that we had visited Muscat. He hoped we were well, and said he had been informed I was going to Constantinople. Had I any news about the war? I told him a treaty of peace had been signed between Russia and Turkey, but that according to the latest accounts, received when we were leaving Kurrachee, the Russians were occupying some places near Constantinople in spite of the protests of the Sultan. His Highness said that since the Russians had got so near to Constantinople it was not at all likely that they would go back. They would no doubt stay there as long as they could. I told him about the supposed understanding between England and Austria to limit the results of the Russian aggression, and his Highness paid great attention to that point, putting repeated questions to elicit further information. He remarked that England might have interfered to advantage at an earlier period, and prevented the Russians from getting close to Constantinople, but that now they were at the very gates the difficulty was much increased.

Sayyid Toorki, I afterwards learned, takes a great and intelligent interest in the different phases of the Eastern question, and his sympathies are strongly aroused in favour of the Turks. The Arabs generally hate the Turks with a cordial hatred, but in the struggle against Russia the Osmanlis are regarded as the defenders of Islam against the infidel. The Sayyid appears to be a man of good sense, and to have a fair knowledge of politics and geography. Being told

that Captain Jourdan was a French officer, his Highness asked whether he had come direct from Paris? When informed that he was returning from Japan, and intended to reach France through Persia and Russia, the Sayyid remarked that the route was very long and difficult. He appeared to know something about Japan and the other countries mentioned. He asked eagerly whether France would go to war with Russia if England did so, and seemed rather disappointed when informed that "a great bazaar" about to be held in Paris would most probably induce that power to pursue a policy of peace for several months to come. While the conversation was in progress, coffee was handed round; some minutes afterwards sherbet, or rather orgeat, a preparation of almonds, and sugar, and water, was brought in. We then rose to depart, and his Highness accompanied us to the outer room, where the governor of the town was in waiting, and he was formally presented to us by the prince himself. We shook hands with Sayyid Toorki, and so our long and interesting interview with his Highness ended.

We then went to see Fort Mirani, one of the twin forts which guard the harbour and the city on the eastern and western sides. Mirani is the most interesting of the two, as it contains many relics of the Portuguese, who built both. Albuquerque took Muscat in 1507, and it was held by the Portuguese until 1652, when it was recovered by the Omanis after a long siege. A certain "worshipper of the cow," a Banian from India, named Narrotum, had a good deal to do in

the delivery of these forts, and with them the town, into the hands of the Arabs. The Banians appear to have been always of some importance in Muscat. Narrotum was a man of wealth and influence, and he had a beautiful daughter, with whom the Portuguese governor, Pereira, fell in love. His Excellency, greatly to his credit, demanded her in lawful marriage, but Narrotum, far from feeling honoured by the proposal, was horrified at the notion of marrying his child to a Christian. Being threatened, however, with the vengeance of the love-sick governor if he refused his consent, he feigned compliance, but asked for a year's time in which to prepare the bride's *trousseau* upon a fitting scale. Pereira, very foolishly, granted the delay. The city, while all this was going on, was being besieged in due form, but Sultan bin-Sief, the Imam, could make little progress, so valiantly was the place defended. Now Narrotum had, in the words of the Arab historian, been given "the keys of the shops in the two forts, and he was agent for the treasury and country;" and he contrived a scheme for the discomfiture of the Portuguese, so that the dreaded marriage might be averted. He represented to the governor, who seems to have been a simple-minded, honest fellow, that the water in the fort tanks was bad, and should be renewed, and that the corn was full of weavils, and ought to be removed, and good corn put in its place. The gunpowder, too, he said, was old, and not to be depended upon. Why not stock the magazines with fresh gunpowder?

Pereira, suspecting no guile, gave Narrotum authority

to replenish the stores, so that Muscat might be in a condition to hold out indefinitely against the besiegers. The Portuguese had command of the sea, so that there was no difficulty in procuring supplies. When the wily Banian had emptied the water-tanks to clean them out, and removed the corn and the powder to make room for better, he sent word to Sultan bin-Sief to assault the city, and further advised him to assault it on a Sunday, when the Portuguese would be keeping their festival day, fiddling and drinking, and Sabbath-breaking generally. The Imam acted on the advice, and set out at the head of his troops, exclaiming, as he gave the order to march, "God is most great! O God, make the orthodox Moslems victorious over the beardless Portuguese!" The prayer was heard; the town wall was passed without difficulty, and the two forts were then taken by escalade. The guns would not go off, for the powder had been tampered with, and the garrison could make no effectual resistance. Two Portuguese ships still kept the mouth of the harbour, but "a hundred men to whom death was sweeter than wine to the wine-bibber," being well paid for the glorious enterprise, attacked them in small boats, and killed all their "polytheist crews."

Before the two great forts fell into the hands of the Arabs, one was named Fort Juan, and the other, the western, Fort Commandato. The former is now called Fort Jalali, or "the glorious," and the latter Mirani, after a former Beloochee governor. Mirani is placed on the summit of a hill about 400 feet high, and is itself

very lofty, the walls in places rising some forty or fifty feet above the rock. It is built of sandstone, which in places crumbles to the touch, but is, on the whole, in a wonderful state of preservation. On the shore, near the flight of steps which leads to the entrance, are eight small bronze cannon, unmounted. They are kept there for salutes, and are in time of trouble a great temptation to the disaffected. One of her Majesty's cruisers has had on sundry occasions to make rocket practice into the angle of the rock in which they lie, to keep dishonest hands off them. Why they are not kept within the fort it is not easy to understand. Perhaps the Government of Muscat is afraid that such an increase to the armament of Fort Mirani would make it independent. At times the forts fall out, and they blaze away at each other across the harbour, and in front of the town, to the great interruption of business. We saw several marks on the face of Fort Jalali which testified to the occasional accuracy of the fire of Mirani. Fort Jalali not very long since fired on the town promiscuously, and the British Residency being within a hundred yards of the cannoneers, was pretty well riddled—it was difficult for them to miss a mark so conspicuous and so near. The British Resident, however, objected, and sent word that if the fire continued, it would be returned from a gun-boat. Jalali ceased firing. But peace has prevailed at Muscat now for a whole year—indeed ever since the Teazer, a twelvemonth since, aimed her shells over the town and the hills beyond at the Bedouins, as I have already mentioned.

When we entered Mirani the garrison consisted of the governor and about half a dozen men, ununiformed and unarmed. Possibly the bulk of the garrison was in town off duty. The governor was a civil, inoffensive old gentleman, with a cotton handkerchief wound round his head by way of a turban. Most of the cannon are iron, rusted apparently through and through; their carriages are worm-eaten and falling to pieces, and it is difficult to understand how they can be fired with safety. Yet a salute of 101 guns was fired on the 1st of January from this fort in honour of the Empress of India. As every shot reverberates in endless peals amongst the hills which surround the harbour and town, the effect must have been wonderfully fine. An inscription cut in stone over one of the inner gateways states that the fort was built in the reign of "Roro Primero, 1588." A very fine bronze gun, some ten feet in length, bears the Spanish arms, with the name of Philip III., "Rey d'Espana," and the date, "1606." This gun was therefore cast by the contemporaries of Guy Fawkes, who little dreamed that it would for centuries form part of the military strength of infidels, worse, if possible, than heretics. It was doubtless placed in this fort when the crowns of Spain and Portugal were temporarily united. On the top of the main tower of the fort is a small circular Portuguese chapel, with a pious inscription to the Virgin, which the Arabs, much to their credit, have not defaced. The holy water font in stone is intact at the entrance; but no altar or cross, or other mark of the original purpose of the little chapel

remains. It is at present used as a sleeping apartment by the commandant of the fort. When we had visited the chapel, we were asked to sit down under a canopy of reeds, whence we had a magnificent view over the harbour and town, and the valley behind the town. Coffee and sherbet were presented to us, and after the usual interchange of compliments, we took our leave of the courteous commandant.

It is not the forts nor his Highness's troops that protect Muscat from the Bedouins or save Sayyid Toorki from the endless machinations of his rivals. Colonel Miles, dwelling alone in the Residency, and the beautiful little gunboat at anchor in the harbour preserve Muscat and its prince from the ravenous prowlers who long to sack the one and depose the other. No wonder Sayyid Toorki is a prey to settled melancholy. Like Hamlet, he had a dear father—the Sayyid Thuwanney—murdered, not by an uncle, but by an ungrateful son, Sayyid Toorki's elder brother; and he would no doubt have been murdered himself, too, had not Colonel Pelly, then British Resident in the Gulf, partly by threats and partly by persuasion induced the parricide to let him out of prison. He spent a couple of years in exile in Bombay before the opportunity came for fighting his brother for the kingdom. During the desultory warfare which placed him on the throne he earned the reputation of being the most daring soldier in Arabia; and when he won, great hopes were entertained that he would prove a vigorous and capable ruler. He has certainly shown himself a very mild and well-intentioned prince,

but he appears to lack the qualities necessary to organize Oman and control the turbulent. If it were not for the beneficent influence of the British Government, the "Kingdom of Security"—Oman means "security," or "settled peace"—would be in a state of complete anarchy.

During the day we spent at Muscat the temperature ranged from 81 to 83 degrees; nothing could be more delightful. The air was dry, clear, and exhilarating. For the previous three or four months the climate had been the same. Muscat has two seasons only—the hot and the cool—each lasting about six months. The hot season is something dreadful; for the black rocks all around give out during the night the heat they store up during the day. The place is a fiery furnace during the whole twenty-four hours; yet it is not regarded as particularly unhealthy. Possibly the six months of reasonably cool weather, and the complete absence of severe diurnal alternations of heat and cold at any time, keep the public health at par. About forty miles in the interior there is a range of tolerably high hills, which are described as perfect sanitaria; it is cool on their breezy tops when the plains are scorched as with fire. But under present circumstances these salubrious hills are practically inaccessible to the broiled denizens of Muscat.

CHAPTER III.

UP THE GULF.—BUNDER ABBAS AND ORMUZ.

Within the Persian Gulf—Bunder Abbas—Persian boatmen—Vast quantities of fish—The Island of Ormuz—Sack and ruin of the city—Escapade of the English sailor and revenge of the Persians—Proceed to the Port of Linga—Visit to the town—An Arab merchant—The domed wells—The Sheikh's garden—Interview with the Sheikh—Walling-up robbers—The Bazaars of Linga—Rose-buds and attar of roses—Linga a thriving place.

LEAVING Muscat on the evening of the 21st March, the Pachumba sighted Cape Mussendom at nightfall on the 22nd, and entered the Persian Gulf, through the Straits of Ormuz, on Saturday morning. At daybreak we were off Bunder Abbas, on the Persian shore, due north of Cape Mussendom, and at the other side of the Straits of Ormuz. There is only an open roadstead here, and a heavy surf prevented our landing. The place, as seen from the sea, looks well. The undulating shore is diversified with patches of green here and there, and some palm-trees. About fifteen miles inland rise sheer up from the plain, magnificent cliffs or ghauts, 8000 feet high. Beyond them is a snow-capped mountain, which was, however, shrouded in mist the whole time we lay at Bunder Abbas. The town is of

no great extent. The houses are square in shape, built of grey limestone, or of mud, or of both combined. The house of the Arab Sheik, who is governor of the town, is large, and has an imposing appearance; but the town itself is in a state of hopeless decay. It is very unhealthy,—partly owing to its situation, and partly to the filthy condition of its narrow lanes, which I am told by the officers of the Pachumba, who have visited it, are very far indeed from being looked after as those of Muscat. No European lives at Bunder Abbas; fever would soon lay hold of any one ill-advised enough to make the attempt. It cannot be said, however, that the natives are at all sickly in appearance. The boatmen attracted notice by their splendid physique. They are big powerful men, masses of muscle standing out at their shoulders and on their arms and legs. I doubt if finer men are to be seen anywhere than these Persian boatmen. They are great fish eaters. The sea teems with fish; shoals of sardines went past the steamer; looking down one saw more fish than water. Great quantities of fish are caught and cured, and sent to the Red Sea, to the Mauritius, and elsewhere; but the fisheries in these parts might be developed beyond the dreams of those at present engaged in it. At Muscat the fish towards evening disport themselves on the water in public view, and jump a couple of feet into the air in pure exuberance of spirits.

Within sight of Bunder Abbas is the island of Ormuz, which, under the Portuguese, and before their time under the Arabs, was the centre of trade of the Gulf.

The port of Ormuz was so rich that it tempted the cupidity of Shah Abbas the Great, and with the assistance of some English vessels, he besieged and took the town in 1663. It was agreed that the spoil was to be equally divided between the military and naval forces which co-operated in the siege. It was also agreed that Gambroon, rechristened Bunder Abbas or the Port of Abbas, was to be made a place of trade, and the English were to have a factory there and to be exempt from import duties. The spoil of Ormuz was so considerable, that the English captains flattered themselves that their share would come to 2,000,000*l.*,—a preposterous amount, far in excess of anything the plunder of the city could have yielded. However, they indulged in that hope, and it might have been at least in part realized, but for the attempt of one unlucky sailor to help himself beforehand. All the gold and silver plate, jewels, and other spoil of great value were placed in the churches and convents, under the seals of the Persian and the English leaders, so that the division might be made fairly at leisure. This avaricious sailor broke into one of the churches at night, and made up a parcel of more of the valuables than he could well carry. He let the parcel fall, and it made a frightful clatter. The Persians were at once on the alert, and they seized and thrashed the sailor. They also represented to their general that if they did not at once help themselves the English would steal all the plunder; and they asked permission to take their share without further delay. The "Duke of Shyraz" at once gave his consent. The

English—all but the solitary sailor—were on board their ships, when they learned to their horror what was going on. Need one wonder that "they swore like men possessed"? That night's work was the last of Ormuz. The city has been a deserted ruin ever since. The Portuguese walls, with a tall pillar or obelisk standing out against the sky, are visible now from that Gambroon which Shah Abbas intended should replace it. But the port of Abbas never succeeded to the trade or the wealth of plundered Ormuz; it had not the splendid harbour nor the commercial traditions which made its rival so flourishing. The island of Ormuz is altogether destitute of vegetation; salt and sulphur cover its rocks and desolate plains, and since the destruction of its commerce it has become a desert. Parts of its mountains are composed of salt, which is quarried out of them, and exported, when opportunity serves, to India. We wished much to visit Ormuz, but neither time nor tide allowed. The great reservoirs, constructed by the Portuguese to hold the water supply of the town, are still intact, and form the most interesting of the remains of that great commercial emporium.[1]

[1] The island of Ormuz is twelve miles in circumference; its form is nearly circular, and its appearance from seaward broken and rugged. The surface, entirely denuded of soil, exhibits the various tints of its singular stratification, which, with the conical shape and isolated position of the numerous small hills composing the island, gives the former a highly volcanic aspect, and would induce us to attribute the origin of the island itself to the same agency. The fort is situated about 300 yards from the beach,

We left Bunder Abbas in the evening, and, steaming past the large and comparatively fertile island of Kissim, arrived the next morning at Linga. This is a busy town on the Persian coast, but ruled by an Arab sheik, tributary to the Shah, and mainly peopled by Arab refugees from the Arabian coast of the Gulf. These Arabs fled when great part of the opposite coast of Arabia was brought under subjection to the Sultan of Turkey a few years ago. Linga is in the Persian province of Laristan, and is a thriving place. It looks better than Bunder Abbas from the shore, the groves of date-trees in the neighbourhood setting off its square grey houses to advantage.

on a projecting piece of land, which is separated from the body of the island by a moat. A few hundred yards from this, now tottering in ruins, stands the lighthouse, which must formerly have been a fine building; the spiral staircase still exists, but it is dangerous of assent. A level plain extends for some distance to the north-east of this building, having its surface scattered over with mounds and ruins of former habitations. There are no fresh-water springs, and the few inhabitants depend for their water-supply upon the rainfalls, which are collected in sundry tanks and wells sunk for that purpose.

Across this plain, towards the rugged hills lining the eastern shore, a singular phenomenon presents itself, which strikingly resembles the "Mer de Glace." For a considerable distance from their bases, the hills are covered with an incrustation of salt, which, in some places has the transparency of ice; in others its surface is partially covered with a thin layer of a dusky red-coloured earth, receiving its tinge from oxide of iron, with which the island is deeply impregnated. On ascending the ridge the progress is impeded by deep pits, on the sides of which the saline crystalizations have assumed a stalactitic form. From the summit a noble view is to be obtained.—Lieut. H. H. Whitelock, I.N., Bombay Geographical Society's Journal, vol. i. p. 113.

At eleven o'clock we went ashore to see the town, and found the narrow, tortuous lanes insufferably dirty and evil smelling. An Arab merchant took us to his house, the best, apparently, in the place. We entered through a hole in the wall which served as a doorway, and crossed a courtyard, around which were placed, on three sides, the kitchen, the stable, and out-offices generally. On the fourth side was a building with an upper storey, which looked like a mosque. The upper room had little windows, with tiny panes of glass. These were the only panes of glass to be seen in Linga. The room was furnished with reed mats—"only mats and nothing more." Two rickety chairs were brought in by a wonderful young negro, evidently a recent importation from Central Africa, but we sat on the mats. All the children of the house and their friends came and had a look at us. A calleoun, or hubble-bubble, was brought, and finally some sherbet. Our host then volunteered to get us donkeys, so that we might go and visit the wells —or, properly speaking, tanks—from which the town is supplied with water. The donkeys were brought, and we set out across the plain, which looked as if it was composed of old mortar, so white and calcareous was it. Of course nothing grows upon that ungrateful soil. About a mile from the town we came upon the "wells." There were three or four of them together, and others scattered over the plain. They were like the largest of the round tanks in Bombay, being about forty-five feet in diameter, and were all surmounted by domes constructed of the limestone of the country. These domes

rose to a height of about forty feet, and had no pretensions to symmetry or architectural effect. One had been so badly arched that a large portion gave way and fell into the water. Externally they are plastered over with a mixture of mud and lime. The domes, however, roughly built as they are, prevent evaporation, and keep the water cool and pure. They are filled by the rain which falls on the plain, and on the rising ground beyond. The Persian ghauts, which were conspicuous behind Bunder Abbas, rise to a great height a few miles to the east of Linga also; and the rain which falls on them rushes over the plain to the sea, of course filling, or helping to fill, the wells on the way. Linga is amply supplied with these domed wells, and fears no drought in the hottest season.

Having seen the wells, we rode off to see the sheik's grounds. The gardens are a portion of the arid plain, cut off from the rest by mud walls, and carefully irrigated. Date-palms occupy a good part of the gardens, but other trees are not wanting. The almond, the tamarind, the gum-arabic tree, and several other kinds are conspicuous. Crops are raised between the plantations, and the barley was already ripe and partly cut. Having seen the gardens, we proceeded to the sheik's house, which stood at a little distance. In the forecourt were scores of horses, mules, and asses, with saddles or packs on their backs. The sheik was receiving a visit from some friendly sheik of a neighbouring district, and his retainers. We were ushered into a long and lofty, but rather dark hall. The sheik was sitting on a carpet

at the further corner, and along the walls on the ground were squatting a couple of score of Arabs, each with his matchlock in his hands. They all politely rose as we entered, and we made our way to the sheik, who shook hands with us, and called for chairs. We refused the chairs, however, and sat Arab fashion, the sheik making room for us on his carpet. The whole assembly sat down again as soon as we were seated. The sheik is a good-looking young fellow, said to be only sixteen years of age, but his full black beard and moustache make it difficult to believe that he is in his teens. After the usual formal salutations, we began the conversation by telling him we had seen the wells and the gardens, and thought both a credit to Linga. He seemed much gratified when informed that Bombay, though it has wells, has never thought of putting over them domes such as we admired in his country. He then asked us about the war, and when we told him Russia and Turkey had made peace, Turkey giving up a good deal of territory to her conqueror, he turned to the Arab next to him, and made a contemptuous remark in a tone of impatience which was very expressive. After some remarks upon things in general, we asked our interpreter whether the time had come to depart, for we saw no signs of coffee or sherbet, and he intimating that we might go without rudeness, we rose; the sheik and all the durbar rose with us, and we shook hands and left.

In going out I scanned the walls near the gateway to notice something in the guise of a buttress. I observed, however, so many protuberances or irregularities in the

wall thereabouts, that I was not certain whether I fixed upon the particular spot I wished to mark. What I wanted to see with my own eyes was the place where a man had been walled up alive, in the March of 1877, by this young chief, as a punishment for robbery and murder. Mr. Russell, the first officer of the Pachumba, was at Linga at the time this fearful punishment was inflicted, and it was he who told me to look for the buttress-like protuberance near the palace gate. I asked our Arab friend where the robber had been walled up last year. He said that the man had been built into the wall in a turret overhanging the entrance, and that it could not be seen from the outside. Of the fact that last March a man had been built into the wall in the sheik's own house there seems to be no doubt whatever.

The sheik is spoken of as a very good ruler; he is evidently a youth not to be trifled with, though only sixteen summers have passed over his head. But then the summers in these parts are uncommonly fierce.

We of course visited the bazaars. In every shop baskets of rose-buds, shedding around a delightful fragrance, were exposed for sale. The roses are sold at two kerauns—that is to say, two francs, for a keraun is a franc, being the twenty-fifth part of a pound—per maund of twenty-eight pounds. A great quantity of attar of roses is exported. But roses, unfortunately, are not the only things which the traveller smells in the bazaar at Linga. The fetid lanes of the town are covered in loosely with mats, which prevent circulation, but do not keep out the heat of the sun, like the substantial mud

roofs of the Muscat bazaars. The shopkeepers appeared to be Persians for the most part, though the bulk of the population is decidedly Arab. A good number of boats lay off the town, and some buggalows of good size were being built on the shore. Linga is apparently a thriving place, and its inhabitants seem to be comparatively well-to-do. The last harvest in Persia was a splendid one, and food of all kinds is abundant and cheap. Grain is exported to Bombay at a good profit.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEARL ISLANDS.

Arrival at Bahrein—Intricate navigation—A new pearl bank—The Sheikh and the English Protectorate—Arab enterprise—The pearl fisheries—The diving season—The divers and pearl merchants—The method of working—Great yield of the fisheries—White pearls and yellow pearls—Pearls as medicine—The donkeys of Bahrein—Exploring the island——A ruined town—Hot-water springs—Fresh water under the sea—An Arab on the true policy for Turkey.

On the 25th March, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the Pachumba left Linga for the Island of Bahrein. She went almost in a straight line westward, crossing the Gulf from the Persian to the Arabian shore. On the 25th we were out of sight of land nearly the whole day, making about five knots. There was a heavy thunderstorm in the forenoon, and the rain reduced the temperature to 72°. In the evening the glass fell to 64°. On the morning of the 26th we arrived at Bahrein. The navigation is very intricate, owing to the number of coral reefs, and it is impossible to approach the island in the night. The morning was fresh, cool, and bracing—quite English. The coast of Bahrein, like that of most of the islands in the Gulf, is low and level, but looks quite bright and green with innumerable plantations of

date-trees. A number of Arab boats, most of them flat bottomed, but with sharp bows and stern, came off for cargo. The principal supply was rice, for which there was then a considerable demand in the Gulf, owing to a failure of the rice crop in Persia, though the wheat harvest in that country was exceptionally good. The weather was too cold to allow of the pearl fishing being carried on; the divers prefer the heats of summer for their avocation. A new pearl bank has been discovered, from which great things are expected. The sheikh, Esau Bin Ali, who is sovereign of the island, or rather islands, for there are two, the greater and the less, expects trouble from the avaricious Arabs round about, and he has therefore asked that a British gunboat should keep in the neighbourhood while the excitement consequent on the first working of the new water-mine lasts. The sheikh relies upon the disinterested protection of England to save him from hungry marauders from the main land, and to defend him besides against the claims of Persia, and Muscat, and Turkey, respectively, to the sovereignty of Bahrein. The population over which he rules numbers 50,000. Some thousands of boats frequent the pearl banks during the season, and it is not always easy to control the feelings of the Arabs who come to the spot from a distance. But since Colonel Pelly's time something like order has reigned at Bahrein, and the island is by no means a bad sort of place to make money in. An intelligent Arab merchant told me that he had sent twelve thousand rupees' worth of mother-o'-pearl "to make buttons" direct to London

last year, and he added, "I got the money!" in a way which showed he was desirous of convincing me that however hazardous the venture might look, he had not acted recklessly in sending his merchandise so far.

The pearl fisheries around Bahrein are by far the most valuable in the Gulf, though the banks extend along nearly the whole of the Arabian coast from Kowait not far from the mouth of the Shat el Arab, southward to Ras el Keimah. There are very few pearl banks on the Persian coast, and their produce is small in quantity and inferior in quality. The coast Arabs regard the banks along their shore and at Bahrein as their own common property; any coast Arab may dive at Bahrein or at any other point, but one not a coast Arab attempting to engage in the business would be regarded as a poacher. Along the coast generally, where the water is comparatively shallow, diving begins in the month of June, but around Bahrein, where the depth is often considerable, it does not fairly commence until July, when the heat of the sun warms the water, and makes long immersion less trying to the constitution. Operations are continued through August and September, and about two thousand boats are employed in the height of the season. Four or five thousand boats find occupation in pearl fishing throughout the Gulf, and some fifteen hundred of these belong to inhabitants of Bahrein. Each boat is manned by from ten to twenty or even thirty-two men. The proceeds are divided into ten shares, the owner or captain getting two-tenths, the divers three-tenths, the rope-pullers who

haul the divers and their findings to the surface two tenths, and the remaining three-tenths are expended on provisions for the whole crew. Most of the partnerships are deeply in debt to agents of the pearl merchants, many of whom are natives of India, and they are obliged to sell all their pearls to their creditor very much at his own valuation, and to buy their provisions from him at any price he chooses to ask. Some of the merchants engaged in this trade are men of capital, and Colonel Wilson, formerly Resident at Bushire, states that they bear so hard upon the fishers, that the latter with all their exertions are sometimes unable to earn sufficient food to eat. The avaricious capitalist lends them money at cent. per cent., forces them to buy their dates and rice from him at a high price, and to complete their dependence hires them a boat, receiving as its owner a two-tenths share of all their earnings. It is not easy to understand the process by which these grasping merchants force the Arabs to submit to be so fleeced. Probably they have by slow degrees brought their debtors to believe that it is a law of nature that pearls belong to the merchants and not to the divers, who have only a right to a bare subsistence, if even to that. A few only of the boats are worked by Arabs who are not the bond-slaves of the pearl merchants.

The ordinary process is this; five or more divers, and as many rope-men or pullers-up agree to work together for the season. They go to a capitalist and get an advance from him for the support of their families and

the provisioning of a boat; perhaps they have also to hire the boat from the moneyed man. If they are very lucky they may get a number of particularly valuable pearls, and then by a little good management, they may pay off their liabilities, and even become small capitalists themselves. But the cases in which matters turn out so satisfactorily are rare; the speculation may prove a comparative failure, the pearls may be few, or small and of little value. Then the partners are very much in the position of Indian ryots whose crops have perished through the drought, and they must borrow money at any price to carry them over until the next season brings the prospect of better things.

I was shown some pearls which seemed to me to be not only small, but of very inferior quality, and was asked more for them than their price in a jeweller's shop in London. Some very fine shells of the pearl-oyster, about seven inches in diameter, were also exhibited, but the Arab who had them would not sell them, being discouraged at the want of success attending his efforts to sell bad pearls at a good price. The oyster which secretes the pearl is not good for food; it is never eaten. The method of fishing is simple enough. The diver has a weight attached to his feet, which sinks him readily straight down to a depth of from one or two to seven or eight, or sometimes even to fully eighteen fathoms. He has a rope tied round him, which he pulls when he wishes to be drawn up, and at his waist is a small net, into which he puts the oysters which he finds. He can remain under water for a minute, or even a minute and a half. It is said that

some men can remain submerged two minutes, but that may be doubted. The nostrils are kept closed by a little instrument of horn, and the water is excluded from the ears with beeswax. The finest pearls are found in the deepest water; the beds which are considered the best are composed of light-coloured sand, lying upon coral. Earth or dark sand is thought to be injurious to the pearl. The oysters move about at the bottom or cling to projections of coral or to sea-weed; the divers see them from the boats, and sinking down, secure them, and put them in their net-bags. When brought on shore, they are opened and the pearls, if any, are taken out; the larger shells are kept and sold for the sake of the mother-of-pearl lining. Sometimes the oysters are sold unopened to persons of a speculative turn, who hope to get a prize, in the shape of a fine pearl, for a mere fraction of its value; if they find nothing but an uneatable oyster, of course, they must resign themselves to their ill fortune. The divers all work fasting; it is accounted dangerous to dive after eating. When the water is quite warm from the burning sun of the Gulf summer, they can dive a dozen times a day without inconvenience, but in June, before the great heats have set in, they only go down three or four times daily. It is not uncommon for them to meet with sharks, but the danger of attacks from saw-fish is more to be dreaded. Many divers have been cut in two by those fearful monsters. The diving is very injurious to the health of the Arabs. They are reduced in body, and suffer much from ophthalmia, but that disease is very common

along the shores of the Gulf amongst the non-divers as well.

The Sheik of Bahrein derives a very handsome revenue from the pearl fisheries. He levies a poll-tax of a dollar a head from every diver, and the same from the attendant rope-holder, and as there are about twenty-five thousand divers, and as many rope-holders, his income from this source must be some fifty thousand dollars a year.[1] A similar poll-tax is levied by the sheiks at all the pearl fisheries. As may be imagined, disputes among the Arabs engaged in pearl fishing are numerous, for the best banks naturally attract more boats than there is room for in a small area. Formerly these disputes often ended in bloodshed and tribal warfare, but Colonel Pelly got the coast Arabs to agree to a maritime truce, and to refer all their disputes to the arbitrament of the British Resident at Bushire. The sheiks look to our gun-boats to keep order, and they find their advantage in being able to levy their poll-tax in peace and quietness.

The best pearls generally find their way to Bombay, whence the whitest and purest are sent to Europe. But in India the pearls most in request are those of yellowish hue, which are supposed to retain their lustre better than the white. In the Baghdad market the white pearls are most sought after. Great quantities of seed pearls are sent to Persia for embroidery, and also for medicinal use. Throughout the east the pearl is supposed to be an excellent tonic, and unknown quantities of ill-shaped ill-coloured pearls are annually pounded in

[1] See Appendix B.

a mortar and made into electuaries. I do not know whether the Persians, who are great believers in the magical effects of these potions, term them "corpse revivers," but they think them so. The pearl is in Asia, from a medicinal point of view, the antithesis of the deadly diamond, which is regarded as the most subtle poison that a prince can administer to his enemy. It will not be forgotten that diamond dust was detected in the glass of sherbet which General Phayre, inspired by his good angel, refused to drink, after returning one morning from a ride in Baroda; and how his Highness, the Guikwar, was accused of having given that "medicine" to the obnoxious Resident's domestics to administer to him at a convenient season. The annual value of the yield of pearls at Bahrein is roughly estimated at 300,000*l.* The other Gulf pearl fisheries may yield 200,000*l.*, more or less, but there is no means of ascertaining the exact amount.

Desiring to explore the island of Bahrein, which is very picturesque and well cultivated, we went ashore in the forenoon in a cargo boat, which drew too much water to get close up to the landing-stage. But the difficulty of getting to the strand dry-shod was surmounted very easily. Some of the largest donkeys I ever saw—far exceeding those of Syria and Egypt in height—were driven into the water close up to the boat's side. For saddles they bore a couple of sticks parallel to the spine, and on them were laid abundance of coarse clothes piled up until they formed a sort of cushion. We got on these, and without much trouble kept even

our feet out of the water, although the donkey-drivers were up to their waists. We rode straight to the postmaster's office, which is kept by an English-speaking Arab, who received us with great courtesy. He suggested that we should go a couple of miles into the country and see the wells of tepid water and the irrigating canals, and then come back and have luncheon at his house. We set off at once, and proceeded on our colossal donkeys along a wide beaten track having the appearance of a tolerably well kept highroad, to and fro on which camels and donkeys wended their way in very fair numbers. We soon came to little rivulets of clear sparkling water, which swarmed with gudgeon and small tortoises. At every hundred yards we could see the water bubbling up from the hidden springs. To the touch the water was neither hot nor cold—just the temperature of the warm hand itself. Date-trees are planted in the fields, which are cut off from one another, and from the waste, by low mud walls that facilitate irrigation. Great numbers of young date-trees were noticeable; the inhabitants evidently have sufficient confidence in the stability of things in the island to form plantations of date-trees on an extensive scale. The ground between the trees yields crops of all kinds. Wheat grows in some places, lucerne and onions and other vegetables elsewhere. The cultivators are all Arabs.

About two miles from the mud-built town around the landing-place we came upon the site of a city, of which little remains now but a ruined mosque with two fine

minarets. Passing out into the country, and quitting the main track, we went over a succession of rivulets, crossing some of them on narrow bridges, consisting of the trunk of a single date-tree. We came at last upon a long straight canal, over two yards in breadth, and two feet or more in depth. Along this canal the water flowed in a fast current at the rate of about twenty-four yards to the minute. We went up the canal for a few hundred yards, and got to the source—a large well, about thirty feet in diameter, and apparently very deep in the centre. The water came up in a continuous stream, and was carried off by the canal. Captain Jourdan calculated roughly that the water passing by a given point on the canal was 840 litres a second, a quantity equal to four tuns, wine measure. The supply comes from the hills on the Arabian mainland. The surface of the well was about ten feet above the level of most of the surrounding land, and about twenty feet above that of the sea. Irrigation is therefore very easy, the canal distributing the water being everywhere above the general level of the land which it traverses. All Bahrein will be soon turned into a smiling garden through the abundance of the supply of pure tepid water for irrigational purposes. The water has a somewhat saccharine taste; we were told by the Arabs that it is wholesome. A house built near the wells enables bathers to dress and undress comfortably, and great numbers avail themselves of these natural tepid baths, which are said to cure many ailments.

Fresh water bubbles up under the sea in many parts

around the coasts, and the boatmen dive down and fill their leather water-sacks with it, and then let them rise to the surface. The boatmen thus save the journey to the wells on shore. The temperature of the water shows that it comes from a depth of about 800 feet below the surface of the earth. We were informed that there are hundreds of wells on the island, and the supply of water from them all is abundant. It is thought by the Arabs that the fresh water at the bottom of the sea is the material out of which the oysters make the pearls. It is an ascertained fact that the best pearls are found after a season of heavy rains.

Upon our return from the wells we had tiffin at the post-master's. Tea without milk was served to us in glass cups. For bread we had "slap-jack"—unleavened bread made of wheaten flour and water—with some of the delicious butter for which Bahrein is famous in the Gulf. We had also a number of hard-boiled eggs, which the son of our host, a fine frank-looking fellow about fourteen years of age, obligingly stripped of their shells with his henna-tinted fingers, and presented to us one by one. There were English salt-spoons, but he did not altogether understand how to use them. He put the salt into them with his fingers, and handed us the supply in what he conceived to be the most finished European style. Our coarse bread was buttered with pocket-knives, the Arab youth lending me one for the occasion. Of course we were asked for news about the war, and that led to our getting an Arab view of the situation.

"The Turks," we were told by the post-master, "gave out along the Gulf that the war was for religion, and some Arabs went to fight for Turkey on that account. But those who went were not very many. It was not to be expected that many would go. People now-a-days don't think so much about religion as they used to do. Old people and a few others of course think of it," our Arab host continued, "but generally men now want to get money and 'make their country proper,' not to fight for their religion, though they would fight for it if it were really in danger. The Turks were foolish in this business. What was the good of saying it was all about religion? The Russians were not fighting for religion, but to get what they wanted. If the Sultan could not fight them with his own soldiers there was no use trying to do it with Arabs. Turkey should do like Persia—say 'I am not strong enough to fight you, so give your orders!' The Russians don't fight Persia now, because the Persians don't give them trouble, and it would be the same with the Turks if they did like the Persians, and did not try to fight when they were not strong enough."

The very intelligent Arab who held this language, which is not a little significant, it must be confessed, can scarcely be taken as an exponent of the views of his countrymen generally at this moment. He is a merchant, and looks at questions of politics and faith through commercial spectacles. He finds besides little difficulty as an Arab in resigning himself to the misfortunes of the Turks. But the Arabs in the main feel

very keenly that Islam itself is humiliated by the successes of the Sultan's enemies, and they experience an unwonted degree of sympathy for the Turks just at present. Even the Persians share this feeling. Though very jealous of Turkey, and by no means unwilling to see her power kept within bounds, they look upon her as the bulwark of Islam against the Muscov, and they would regard her complete overthrow as but the prelude to their own subjugation. A report that Constantinople had fallen was received with consternation in Bushire, and in some places in the interior of Persia popular demonstrations showed how even the Shiahs felt the shock.

But the Oriental soon reconciles himself to the decree of fate, and there can be little doubt that the sentiments of the Arab merchant with regard to the wisdom of accepting the inevitable, and obeying Russia as the best means of avoiding trouble, would soon become general in these regions, if nothing were done by Great Britain to counterbalance the material and moral results of successes of the Northern Power in the late war.

CHAPTER V.

TRADE AND POLITICS IN THE PERSIAN GULF.

The gun-boat Teazer and the Political Resident of Bushire—Growing trade of the Gulf—Order maintained by British gun-boats—Inconvenience of our present position in the Gulf—Persian jealousy—Necessity for a British station within the Gulf—Development of trade consequent on the opening of the Suez Canal—The British India Company's steamers—Trade with India and Africa—Estimated annual value of the Gulf trade.

As we were returning from the shore to the Pachumba in the afternoon, H.M.S. Teazer, Captain Wodehouse, steamed up with the flag of the Political Agent at Bushire flying at the fore. We went on board to deliver our letters of introduction to Colonel Ross, and he very kindly invited us to stay at the Residency at Bushire while at that port. He was on his way to visit officially the Pirate Coast, a slip of territory on the Arabian shore extending from Bahrein to Cape Mussendom—a pirate coast now only in name. From Colonel Ross and Captain Wodehouse we procured a good deal of interesting information regarding things in the Gulf. Settled order is gradually becoming the rule, the trade, both local and foreign, is steadily growing. Indeed we saw evidence of this satisfactory tendency at all the

places we visited after leaving Muscat. The fact that Muscat itself is not so flourishing as it once was is largely due to the improved condition of things in the Gulf itself. Traffic can now be carried on direct with the ports in this inland sea instead of indirectly through Muscat, which in former years was the entrepôt of the Gulf trade with the outer world.

The Persian Gulf is about 600 miles in length, from Cape Musendom to the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, and it varies in breadth from 120 to 230 miles. The British India steamers now go up and down weekly; and, judging from the Pachumba, they are well-appointed and comfortable. Other steamers also trade in these waters. Of course no one in his senses would go up the Gulf during the summer months in search of health or pleasure. The heat is then literally stifling, and exceeds in intensity that known in any other sea. The Gulf is perfectly navigable throughout, and is considered by sailors safer than the Red Sea, though there is not a lighthouse from end to end of it. Trade has of late years assumed unexpected proportions in its ports and and islands. This is due mainly to the enforcement of order by British gun-boats, acting under the direction of the political agent at Bushire. The Gulf was made really safe for peaceful traders only ten or a dozen years since by the vigour and firmness of Colonel Pelly. Organized piracy had indeed been put down before this time, at the cost of many expeditions sent from Bombay; but settled trade is of very recent growth in those parts.

The Shah of Persia is, nominally at least, the

sovereign of the north-eastern littoral of the Persian Gulf throughout nearly its whole extent. Of late years the Turks, who have conquered nearly the whole of the interior of Arabia, have extended their rule over the Arabian or south-western coast of the Gulf. But it is owing to the efficient police which we are at the trouble and cost of maintaining, that commerce has increased and is increasing in those waters to an extent which a few years ago would have been deemed impossible. But from motives, presumably of delicacy, none of the protected islands or sheiks have been asked to contribute a farthing of tribute in return for the security and peace which they enjoy under the protecting shadow of the British flag. We have neglected to acquire any legal right to their fidelity or allegiance. The Turks when absorbing strip after strip of the Gulf littoral showed themselves perfectly aware of this. They denied point-blank that we had any right to object to their annexations, as we had never exercised the rights of sovereignty over the sheiks in whose fate we interested ourselves.

The inconvenience arising from this state of things may practically disappear if the protectorate of the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan, which we have assumed for good or evil, should prove to be a reality, and lead to an identity of interests and of policy between the Ottoman and the British Empires. But it cannot be denied that our position in the Gulf has been hitherto, in a legal and international point of view, very anomalous. The Resident at Bushire has exercised a sort of

informal dictatorship wherever the Persian, or the Turkish, or the Omani power was not able to assert itself decisively; but, as one or the other of those sovereigns claimed jurisdiction over every strip of coast and every island in the Gulf, the possibility of embarrassing complications could never be overlooked.

The Persians always regarded the Residency at Bushire with great and not altogether unnatural jealousy. For a long time they refused to allow the Resident even to build a house, although a house in that climate was necessary to health. When the British Government pressed the matter, permission was reluctantly accorded, but it was stipulated that the house should be only of the dimensions of the Resident's tent. The medical officer in charge of the Residency venturing to build a house for himself, it was pulled down by order of the Persian authorities, in spite of all remonstrance. Things are not quite so bad now, but our presence at Bushire and our undefined position in the Gulf trouble the repose of the politicians of Teheran. "The Persians have some good qualities," wrote Colonel Pelly from Bushire to the Bombay Government, fifteen years ago, "but they are jealous and small-minded beyond any people I ever came across in the course of twenty-two years' travel."

Their distrust and dislike are as pronounced now as in 1863, yet the port of Bushire, situated on Persian soil, near the head of the Gulf in its remotest part, is still the spot from which we rule its waters, and encourage legitimate commerce, keeping the peace,

and putting down piracy and the slave-trade. Colonel Pelly pointed out that there being no real political confidence on the part of the Government at Teheran towards England, the former, influenced and overawed by Russia, or yielding to the promptings of its own jealous temperament, might at any moment interrupt our Eastern communications *viâ* the Gulf by an act within its own jurisdiction, before diplomacy or force could intervene to save them. And to obviate that danger, and secure our position in the Gulf, he proposed that a British free port should be established near Cape Mussendom, near the entrance of that inland sea. The Sultan of Muscat, there was reason to hope, would cede the necessary ground, upon which might be built a Residency, a telegraph station, a coal depôt, and, in course of time, warehouses and a town. Such a settlement would, I think there can be little doubt, have become in a very short time as flourishing as was Ormuz —which was situated at the other side of the straits leading into the Gulf—before the Persians wrested it from the Portuguese and reduced it to a heap of ruins. A great port in European hands, commanding the entrance of the Persian Gulf, is a political and commercial necessity, if civilization is to prevail definitively over barbarism in its waters.[1]

[1] I came to this conclusion from what I heard and observed while in the Gulf, and I was glad to learn subsequently that Sir Lewis Pelly not only held that view, but had very strongly urged it upon Government. Copies of some of the despatches which that able and energetic official, who first introduced order and peace into the Gulf, were placed in my hands in London by a merchant largely interested in

The Gulf trade has been greatly developed by the opening of the Suez Canal. European goods are brought thither by the Red Sea route, and compete successfully with the merchandise carried by the old caravan routes from the Mediterranean ports, *viâ* Damascus and Aleppo, to Baghdad and Bussorah, and Western and Northern Persia. There is a trade with territories to the eastward of India; with China and Java, as well as with Bombay and Calcutta. Since 1862 a regular steam service has been in operation between Bombay and the ports of Bunder Abbas, Linga, Bushire, and Bussorah. This service was begun in doubt and hesitation with

the Gulf trade. I had not seen them before. The following passage from a despatch written at Bushire in February, 1863, is worth reproducing: "I believe that in a settlement of the nature suggested (near Cape Mussendom) would be found the best means practicable for preventing slaves entering the Gulf; of preventing piracy and disturbance in the Gulf itself; of civilizing the Maritime Arabs; of extending a healthful influence into Arabia on the one hand, and into Western Mekran on the other; of offering to many Indian and other merchants now scattered round the shores of the Gulf, an unmolested refuge for the free prosecution of commerce; and, finally, of giving to the ports of the Gulf in general an impetus and an example which it might be expected would in the end induce or compel the Government of those ports either to imitate our system or risk the loss of their trade." One serious inconvenience arising from the want of such a settlement in the Gulf under our own flag is, that British subjects committing an offence in those parts are not amenable to any local jurisdiction, and either escape punishment altogether or have to be sent down to Bombay for trial—a tedious and costly process, involving much hardship to prosecutors, and a virtual denial of justice in most cases. The Resident at Bushire has magisterial powers, but his position on foreign soil necessarily interferes with the free exercise of them.

steamers of 500 tons burden, plying every six weeks; but it has steadily prospered, until now the British India Company has vessels of even 1100 and 1200 tons, making the voyage weekly between Bombay and Bussorah, and other steamers of that company run directly between the Gulf and London. The Persians have, besides, established a line, and send opium to China, and grain and pilgrims to Jeddah, in steamers under their own flag. The vessels from Java bring sugar, and take back dates, grain, and opium. Native craft come from the western coast of India, from Zanzibar, Muscat, the Arabian coast-line near Aden, and the ports of the Red Sea. Goods find their way to the Gulf by caravan from Meshed and from Herat, and other of the less remote parts of Central Asia, through Seyd to Bunder Abbas, which is the natural outlet of the trade of that region, as Bushire is of the goods coming through Shiraz. Goods coming from Baghdad down the Tigris by steamer or boat are transhipped at Bussorah for transport to the Gulf ports, or beyond. There is, besides, the trade in the products of the Gulf itself, and of the territories along its shores; the produce of the pearl fisheries; the fish caught along the Arabian coast and exported to the Red Sea ports; the dates and the miscellaneous produce of the cultivated districts around the various towns on the littoral, and in the innumerable islands. I have heard business-men—Englishmen—engaged in the Gulf trade estimate its annual value at eight millions sterling. No statistics are available to test this estimate, which I am inclined to

think, from what I learn from others, is too high. But there can be no doubt that the Gulf trade has assumed of late years immense proportions, and it would be difficult to assign limits to its further development.

CHAPTER VI.

BUSHIRE AND THE PERSIANS.

Arrival at Bushire—Dilapidated walls and towers—The shallow harbour—Distance from the roadstead—The Bushire boatmen—State of the town—Considerable trade—Intramural graveyards—Epidemics—Reception at the Residency—The road to Shiraz—Severities against robbers—The Prince governor of Shiraz—Walling-up prisoners—Crucifixion of a well-born bandit—Imprisonment only for rich malefactors—Want of roads—A proposal to make them rejected—Avarice of the Persian officials—Corruption more undisguised than in Turkey—Constant migration from Persian into Turkish territory—Climatic division of Persia into the hot and the cold country—The zone of winter rains—Political division of Persia—Immense extent of the Persian territory—Fertile only in parts—Official estimates of the population too low—An independent estimate—Nomads and settled population—Severe governors keep the Nomads from pillaging—Governors of the Reigning House—Jealousy of the House of Othman, and its practical results—Persian artisans and agriculturists—Mohammareh and its capabilities—The river Karun—Russian influence at Teheran—Adverse to the development of South-west Persia—The Christian population of Persia—Russia dissembles her love for them—Miseries of the Jews—The Guebres, or Fire-Worshippers—Improvement in their lot—Good points of the Persians—Aptitude for trade—Diffusion of education—Persian soldiers—Elements of military strength—Persians better horsemen than the Arabs.

We left Bahrein on the morning of the 27th March, and steamed nearly due north for Bushire on the Persian

coast of the Gulf. "Bushire" is a Europeanized form of Abu Sheyhr, Father of Cities, the real name of the place. On our way thither there was another thunderstorm, and the glass fell to 67 deg., the north-west wind which prevailed being very chill and uncomfortable.

We arrived off Bushire on the morning of the 28th. The town is built on the end of a long peninsula of level sand which runs out at right angles to the coast line, and at a little distance the square tower-like houses of grey sandstone appear to rise out of the water, like a Persian Venice. The houses of the better class are surmounted by wind-catchers, little towers fifteen or twenty feet high, which arrest every current of air, no matter from what direction it may blow, and send it down through flues into the rooms below to enable the inmates to exist during the summer heats. The town is defended towards the land by a wall fast falling to ruin, with bastions at intervals equally dilapidated. The breaches made by the British force which captured the town during the Persian war have never been repaired. On the three sides washed by the sea there is no wall, but towers, now for the most part mere ruins, are placed a few hundred yards apart so as to command the strand. The harbour, such as it is, cannot be entered by ships drawing more than ten feet of water. It is formed by two banks of sand which protect it somewhat from the fury of the waves during the squalls which are so frequent in the Gulf. Large vessels have to anchor in the roads about three miles

from the town. The Bushire boatmen are great gainers by this state of affairs, as they can generally dictate their own terms during rough weather to those who have cargo to land. The Pachumba had to carry her Bushire consignments on to Bussorah, owing to the impossibility of arranging matters reasonably with the boatmen, who were quite extortionate. When she returned she may have found them in a less avaricious mood, for they doubtless profited by the discovery that cargo need not of necessity be landed at any price on a given day, whether it be one of sunshine or storm. The boatmen at Bushire, as at Bunder Abbas, are big muscular fellows; they are apparently of mixed Persian and Arab blood.

The town is larger than any we have yet seen along the shores of the Gulf, but in its general features it is the same. The streets are narrow and tortuous, and altogether unpaved and undrained. They are worn into deep channels in the centre by the mule traffic, and the pedestrians pick their way along the higher ground on either side. The place has never been swept since it was built, except by the plague. Dirt is over all, and evil smells abound. Still there is considerable life and movement on the shore and in the narrow streets; the long files of mules and donkeys coming into the town from Shiraz give considerable animation, and just now there is a brisk exportation of grain to India and the Red Sea. Beggars whine at every corner, and more pertinacious beggars it would be difficult to find; they are an unmitigated nuisance. All over the town graveyards are stumbled upon. When the plague was last

here, in 1868, and during the frightful famine which desolated Persia a little after, these shallow graveyards were full to bursting; the corpses scarcely found earth to hide them. The town is filthy, and ventilation of any kind is so impossible in its crooked lanes and stone-blind alleys, that it would be a wonder if the plague, once it got in, could find its way out. An epidemic in Bushire is caught as in a trap, and of necessity must go on killing people while there are any left susceptible to its influence. There can be no escaping its pestilential breath. The plague nearly emptied the town on its last visitation; if it comes once more, either across Persia from Rescht on the Caspian, or down the Tigris from Baghdad, it will do as much for Bushire again. The most ordinary attention to sanitary rules would make Bushire healthy enough, for its situation on a sandy soil, surrounded on three sides by the open sea, and exposed to all the winds of heaven—and to one or two from the other place, if we may credit all we hear—ought to secure it exemption from severe epidemics, however hot and oppressive the summer months may be.

We were very hospitably received at the Residency, and we had the pleasure of meeting there Major Smith, the superintendent of the telegraph lines through Persian territory, who had come from Teheran on a tour of inspection viâ Kermansha and Baghdad to Bushire. He was about to return to the Shah's capital, accompanied by another gentleman, by way of Shiraz and Ispahan. Captain Jourdan joins this party, which thus becomes formidable in numbers to banditti on the track.

Three Europeans, with their attendants, are not to be lightly attacked by less than a score of thieves at least. We also see Mr. Paul, of the firm of Messrs. Gray and Paul, which has done so much in developing the trade of this part of the Gulf.

During our brief sojourn we see and hear many things which throw light upon the state of affairs in this part of the world. The road—if road it may be called, which road is none—between Bushire and Shiraz was never so safe as it is at present. The Prince Governor of Shiraz—an uncle of the Shah—is a very old but very severe man. He walls up robbers inexorably when he catches them, and if he does not catch them, builds in somebody else who may be "given up to justice" by the frightened villagers, for they know well that he does not mean to stand any nonsense. That is at all events the prevailing impression. That he walls up malefactors with the best results is certain. Sometimes he chops off their hands or feet. Crucifixion is occasionally employed to strike terror into evil-doers. An English officer at present employed in India once came unexpectedly upon a fine young Persian, crucified, and with a long thin nail driven through his stomach. The man was alive and suffering such frightful agony, that the Englishman was overwhelmed with horror at the sight, and felt quite sick. He could not pursue his journey, and returned whence he had started. He was haunted during the day by the frightful image of what he had seen, and sent his servant repeatedly to inquire whether death had relieved the man from his torture. The

messenger returned again and again with the information that the victim was still alive; it was not until ten hours after Major —— had seen him first, that he expired. This malefactor was of good family, but had taken to highway robbery. He escaped detection and even suspicion for a long time, but his favourite wife in a fit of jealousy gave information to the government, and he was arrested. The authorities determined to make a severe example of him, and he was condemned to be crucified, and to have a nail driven through his pendant body. As we have seen, that terrible sentence was rigorously carried out. It is to be hoped that the well-born robber's dying pangs were not embittered by the knowledge that his fate was precipitated by the anger of a wife whom he loved, but had in some way offended. "Hell knows no fury like a woman scorned," and even if she only fancies herself wronged, the effect is sometimes unfortunate. Persian husbands who are bandits should keep on good terms with their wives—but I will not stop to moralize. Imprisonment is a form of punishment rarely resorted to unless the criminal has friends who are willing to pay for his keep in gaol. If a villain be very rich, he is fined until he is ruined, and then bastinadoed. All this wholesome severity reassures the good and makes the wicked tremble throughout the province of Farsistan. Robbery is at a discount, and trade improves.

Trade in this part of Persia would flourish largely, and Bushire would become opulent if there were even a single road from that port to Shiraz. But there is

none, and every box, bale, and bundle has to be carried all the way into the remote interior on the back of an ass or a mule. Carts are out of the question, for there is not a yard of road on which their wheels could run. Of course, the cost of transport eats up profits, and renders a great trade impossible. Messrs. Gray and Paul proposed to make a road with English money from Bushire to Shiraz, and to charge a toll upon all vehicles. The Persian authorities wanted to know what they were to get out of it? As they saw their way to no backsheesh, they refused to allow the road to be made. The notion of making it themselves and recouping the outlay by a toll never entered their heads. The same firm, or the Bussorah branch of it, Messrs. Gray and Mackenzie, proposed to develope the resources of the country along the banks of the river Karun, which flows into the Shat-el-Arab at Mohammerah, about twenty miles below Bussorah. They asked permission to put steamers on the Karun, which is a fine stream navigable for eighty miles from its confluence with the Shat-el-Arab, and now utterly useless to Persia and mankind. The first and only question was, "What will you pay us to let you put steamers on the river?" So that proposal came to nought. It is the same, I am told, in every matter suggested to the Persian authorities for the development of the country. If backsheesh to the officials be not forthcoming, and that, too, on a grand scale which will enable all in the service to get something handsome, permission to undertake the most obvious improvements is uniformly refused. No Persian dreams

of getting himself into a sea of troubles by undertaking anything in the way of improvement. He would have the officials down upon him at once for a share of the spoil.

All whom I meet tell me that Turkey is far in advance of Persia in these things. In the Ottoman Empire, as all over the East, backsheesh plays its part; but some outward veil of decency is rarely dispensed with. Bribery is illegal, and discovery may have very serious consequences if a man has many enemies. Cases of oppression occur; but they are not the rule, but the exception; they occur in defiance of laws and regulations which are clearly laid down, and are in the main observed in a certain oriental fashion. But in Persia the caprice and the avarice of the governors form the only rule. The consequence is that there is a constant migration from the Persian western provinces into the adjoining Turkish territory, on the opposite bank of the Shat-el-Arab. The traveller sees a marked difference between the Turkish and Persian sides of the river, cultivation and prosperity being evident on the former and evidences of retrogression on the latter.

On the morning of the 29th a heavy gale came on from the north-west, and rendered it impossible for the mails to get off to the Pachumba. I had therefore another day at Bushire. The thermometer stood at 62 deg., and snow was visible on range after range of the Persian hills about forty miles inland.

The Persians consider their country to be naturally

divided into two parts—Gurmsir, or the warm country, lying between the hills and the coast, and Sarhadd, or the cold country. The Sarhadd is the great plateau, stretching eastward from the line of hills which fringes Persia for nearly a thousand miles in an almost continuous line, from the entrance to the Gulf, north-westward parallel to its coast-line and to the whole navigable length of the Tigris. This immense region is for several months of the year covered with snow, which, when melted, partly atones to Persia for the absence of the monsoon. The cold wind, blowing over those snow-clad uplands during the winter months, makes the Gulf at times bitterly cold, and in the spring the Gulf climate is not very different from that of England at the same period. From November to April therefore a trip up the Gulf would be very useful to heat-bound Indians, desirous of spending a few weeks in a comparatively cool and bracing climate, but unable to undertake a long journey to Europe. Persia, unlike India, has four seasons, winter, spring, summer, and autumn; and, like the Gulf and the country northward, is situated within the "zone of winter rains," which extends as far as central Europe.

Besides the obvious physical division into the warm and the cold country, Persia, politically, is divided into four provinces and twenty-four sections, each province having six sections to its share. Khorassan, the province of the Rising Sun, is the eastern division; Azerbaijan, the Setting of the Sun, is the western; Irak is the central province, lying between these two; and Fars—

which gives its name to Persia—is the south of the Shah's dominions. The low country, between the hills buttressing the great Persian plateau and the waters of the Gulf, is scarcely regarded as a part of Persia proper by eastern geographers; it is called Arabistan, or the country of the Arabs, for its population is for the most part of Arabian origin. The Shah rules over some 630,000 square miles of territory, an immense area, far exceeding that of the Sultan's Asiatic dominions, vast as they are, for they amount to 500,000 square miles all told. But in fertility and population Persia is far inferior to Asiatic Turkey. A great portion of its surface is little else than a stony desert, and though wherever there is rain, or rather snow, in abundance, the soil is wonderfully productive, the area capable of tillage is very restricted. The valleys between projecting spurs of the great plateau are very beautiful, and the industry of the Persian agriculturists, who are much more skilful and painstaking than the Arabs, makes them bloom like gardens. But the productive valleys are for the most part isolated; the country wants roads as well as rivers, and the government makes no attempt to supply the deficiencies of nature. It is usual to set down the population at from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 only; but Major St. John, who had abundant opportunities during a long residence in the country, of forming an independent opinion, considered that the estimate, though more or less based upon official representation, ought to be doubled. The local officials have no interest in sending up accurate statis-

tics to Teheran, but rather the contrary, for the smaller the population of their districts is supposed to be the less money they have to remit to the treasury, and the more they are able safely to keep for themselves. He is strongly of opinion that the Shah's subjects really number about ten millions.

The population is divided into the Iliats or Nomads and the more civilized inhabitants of the towns and villages, between whom there is a perpetual antagonism. Most of the brigandage, which from time to time renders trade so difficult and life and property insecure, is the work of the Nomads. These are of different races and speak different languages. Some are Arabs, and speak Arabic; some are Turkomans, and speak a dialect of Turkish; others are of Persian stock. When a vigorous and cruel governor is at the head of affairs in a province, the Nomads find honesty to be the best policy, for the punishment meted out to Iliats suspected of robbery leaves nothing to be desired on the score of severity. But when the governor is of a different stamp, they do pretty much what they please, for there is nothing like law or organized government, as we understand those things; everything depends on the character of the satrap who happens to be in office. In one respect the Persians are, however, somewhat in advance of the Turks; governors are kept longer in office, and when a capable man is appointed he is able to accomplish something and leave his mark on a province before he is removed. Members of the reigning house are appointed to important offices, and they have naturally exceptional

weight and authority with subordinates. The jealousy of the House of Othman deprives the dynasty which rules on the Bosphorus of the advantages which might be derived from the active participation of its princes in public affairs.[1] Persia is wiser in this respect; but not even the blessing of being ruled occasionally by viceroys who, being near relatives of the Shah, are very nearly omnipotent, and can crucify even men of good family who take to highway robbery, can atone to her provinces for the want of settled institutions and recognized law.

The Persians are very intelligent, and their artisans and agriculturists have a reputation for skill and industry denied to their neighbours, but unintelligent government prevents the country from making even such small progress as one sees in Asiatic Turkey. Bushire is the chief port of the empire, but its custom-house yields but an insignificant revenue to the govern-

[1] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, in a paper published in the *Nineteenth Century*, of July, 1877, on Turkey, speaks very strongly on the exclusion of the Imperial Princes from all share in public business. "It stands to reason," says his lordship, "that the restrictions to which they are condemned must operate with two-fold venom upon the State. The jealousy which keeps them spell-bound in the Seraglio, hoodwinks their understandings, and renders the want of knowledge an heirloom in the ruling family, at the same time that it confirms their Imperial Keeper in those habits of indolence and self-indulgence which the dread of competition and popularity on their side might otherwise counteract. It tells with unusual force in a country where so much depends on the personal acquirements of the sovereign, and at a period when every government is expected to give proof of qualities commensurate with the wants of its people and the progress of its rivals."

ment, for there are no roads leading to the interior of the country. The custom-house at Bunder Abbas is farmed by the Sayyid of Muscat. The true port of Persia is Mohammerah, at the junction of the Karun and the Shat-el-Arab, thirty miles below the Turkish town of Bussorah, but its natural advantages have been completely disregarded, and as I have mentioned, the offer of an English firm to put steamers on the Karun and develope the trade of the district was rejected. The River Karun and the Port of Mohammerah, if turned properly to account, would, in the course of a very few years, alter the whole outlook for Persia, which is now, its best friends confess, by no means hopeful.

When passing up the Shat-el-Arab, a few days later on, we shall see the insignificant-looking town of Mohammerah, built on the wide river-like canal, three-quarters of a mile in length, which connects the Karun with the Shat-el-Arab. This canal varies in width from two hundred to four hundred yards, and is from thirty to forty feet deep. It is so wide and deep that many people maintain that it is a river and not a canal, but there is no doubt that it is the work of man, and Herodotus so described it. To this day it is called el Haffar, or the Canal. It strikes the Karun at an elbow where, after coming from the east, that river turns to the south, to flow to the Persian Gulf, parallel to the Shat-el-Arab. The Karun falls into the sea only three miles to the east of the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, its course from source to mouth being wholly within Persian territory. Even at low water it is nine feet deep from Moham-

merah to the Gulf, and it is quite navigable for vessels of suitable draft, although the Turks, from interested motives, represent it as shallow and dangerous. They, of course, find their advantage in securing all available traffic for the Shat-el-Arab, and they have no desire to see merchandise for the Persian markets escaping the custom-houses at Bussorah and Baghdad by the route of the Karun. That is natural enough; but that the Persians, who are, not without reason, regarded as one of the most quick-witted races of the East, should on their part play into the hands of the Ottomans by refusing to allow foreigners, at their own risk, to do for the one navigable river of Persia what has been done for the Shat-el-Arab and the Tigris, seems at first sight inexplicable.

There is no reason to doubt that Russian influence at Teheran, which is much stronger than our own, has been exerted to prevent the development of the foreign trade in the south-west of Persia. By working skilfully on the jealousy with which the Persian Government regards our presence in the Gulf, the Russian Legation has found means to prevent any of the proposals which have been made from time to time, being accepted, although some of them at least were so manifestly advantageous to the country, that they were favourably entertained and almost acceded to. Meanwhile, Russia is steadily turning her diplomatic ascendency to commercial account. Her goods have superseded those of England throughout the northern provinces of Persia, and they are now finding their way largely into the

central, and even, to some extent, into the south-western districts. Her efforts to divert the Persian caravan trade, as far as practicable, from Turkey to the Caspian route, and Baku and Poti are very painstaking, and have secured a large measure of success. There would be no reason to complain of her enterprise in that direction if she did not selfishly interfere to prevent the development of those parts of Persia which are practically inaccessible to her manufactures, in order to secure a monopoly of the trade of the rest of the country for herself. Our ministry at Teheran has not been able to counterbalance the influence which is openly exercised by its Russian rival. It is very generally believed, or at all events stated, that the British ministry gets such information only as the Russian ministry, in its wisdom, vouchsafes to allow it to procure. This is another way of saying, that in Teheran Russian influence is supreme. A balance of influence is, perhaps, an impossibility in the east; one power is first, in a given sphere, and the rest nowhere.

If Persian timidity—which could only be overcome by bribing Persian officials wholesale—had not, under Russian instigation, rendered unavailing the capabilities of the Karun, and the districts through which it flows, the political and commercial advantages that would have accrued to the Shah's dominions from the acceptance of the offers made could not be easily exaggerated. The river has its source in the Yellow Mountain, one of the Bachtzari range, not very far from Ispahan. It is deep and navigable from a point near the town of

Shuster for some eighty miles, almost due west to Mohammerah. The river Dizful, issuing from mountains to the north of Kermanshah and Hamadan, flows into it a little to the west of Shuster. Being fed the year through by mountain snows, it is always comparatively cool, and its banks are pleasant and salubrious. Captain Selby, I.N., who first explored it in a steamer found it but 80° Fahr. in August, when the Shat-el-Arab, at a point but two hundred yards distant, was 96°—an enormous difference. The practical gain from this coolness of the waters of the Karun is that Mohammerah is naturally much more salubrious than Bussorah, and, with a little attention to sanitary principles, it might be made a very desirable resort during the oppressive heat of summer, which renders life a burden at Bussorah and Baghdad. There are some marshes near Mohammerah which at times give rise to fever, but they could be very easily drained. If the railway, which will be, no doubt, constructed, sooner or later, from the Mediterranean to Baghdad be prolonged southward towards the head of the Gulf, the position of Mohammerah, and the fact that it can be easily rendered a very healthful place, will, no less than its position on the eastern bank of the great river, render it a formidable rival to Bussorah, or even Kowait, as a possible terminus.[2]

[2] Some idea of the potential value of Mohammerah to Persia may be formed from the following extract of a letter, addressed by Major St. John to Baron Reuter, describing the capabilities of the country of which it is the port:—"The vast field for the supply of grain to Central Persia is that part of the Mesopotamian Valley lying between the Persian mountains and the river Tigris,

But if Persia is to profit by her natural advantages, very sweeping changes will have to be made in her

anciently called Susiana, but now known as Khuzistan and Arabistan. This is a flat district, covering about 18,000 square miles, intersected by one considerable river, the Karun, and many minor streams, and thus offering for irrigation works on a large scale facilities elsewhere denied to Persia, and means of inland navigation 150 miles from the sea in a direct line. Once the garden of Persia, and the seat of an ancient capital, its position beyond the hills and its proximity to the Turkish frontier, have reduced it to a mere shadow of its former opulence. Sparsely populated, ill-cultivated, and misgoverned as it is, Susiana still produces food far in excess of its own wants. The surplus finds its way to the sea, and is exported to Arabia, Bombay, Batavia, the Mauritius, and even to Europe. A little indigo (insufficient for the supply of Persia, which imports 80,000*l.* to 100,000*l.* worth annually), is still successfully cultivated, and the sugar-cane was once extensively grown." Major St. John recommends a railway from Shuster, situated as it is at the head of the navigable waters of the Karun, to Ispahan. He says,—"Great as are the difficulties in the way of this, its advantages are so immense and so obvious as to render the greatest caution advisable before rejecting it as impracticable. In the first place Shuster is nearer to Ispahan by 250 miles than any other place having water communication with foreign countries; it is on Persian soil, and the river which connects it with the sea runs through Persian territory. The surrounding district is not only the most fertile in Persia, but that which offers the most promising opportunities to improvement by irrigation or otherwise. The Persian Government derives little revenue from the province, which is mostly owned by men of small influence at Teheran. There would thus be less trouble in the acquisition of land, and the introduction of new-fangled notions than elsewhere. It is further removed from the influence of Russia, and therefore anti-English trade policy than the Baghdad route. It would form a link in the Anglo-Indian railway of the future as well, or better than a line from Baghdad to Kermanshah, as a railway from the former place to Shuster would cross a level plain."

system of government, and it is by no means likely that the predominating influence at Teheran will sanction anything in the nature of honest reforms. It best suits the Russian policy that Persia shall steadily decay and ultimately fall to pieces. It is a singular fact that the state of the Christian population throughout Persia has not, as yet, touched the heart of the Power that has made so many sacrifices for the amelioration of the lot of the Christians in Turkey, which is by no means so deplorable. One thing at a time is, no doubt, the maxim of the modern Crusaders. The turn of Persia will come, and then woe to the Shah if his Christian subjects still groan under the oppression which at present makes them almost as miserable as the Jews themselves. Neither Christians nor Jews in Persia have any rights; they are oppressed without let or hindrance, not only by the local authorities, but by all bigots, that is to say by the majority of the population at large. Neither their persons nor property are safe.

"J. J. Benjamin II.," a pious and very intelligent Moravian Jew, who travelled all over the East to investigate the condition of the people of Abraham in strange lands, in his quaint way, gives, under fifteen heads, the oppressions to which the Jews are subject; and, as I have said, the Christians throughout the length and breadth of Persia are very nearly as badly off as the children of Israel. Throughout Persia, he says, the Jews are obliged to live in a part of the town separated from the other inhabitants, for they are

regarded as unclean creatures who bring contamination with their intercourse and presence. They have no right to trade in stuff goods. Even in the streets of their own quarter of the town they are not allowed to keep any open shop. They may only sell spices and drugs, or carry on the trade of a jeweller, in which they have arrived at great perfection. Under the pretext of their being unclean, they are treated with the greatest severity, and should they enter a street inhabited by Mussulmans they are pelted by the boys and mob with stones and dirt. They are even forbidden to go out when it rains, for it is said the rain would wash dirt off them which would pollute the feet of the Mussulman.

If a Jew is recognized as such in the streets, he is subjected to the greatest insults; the passers by spit in his face, and sometimes beat him so cruelly that he falls to the ground and has to be carried home. If a Persian kills a Jew, and the family of the deceased can bring forward two Mussulmans as witnesses of the fact, the murderer is punished by a fine of twelve tumauns, or six hundred piastres, but if two such witnesses cannot be discovered the crime remains unpunished, even though it has been publicly committed and is well known. The flesh of the animals killed according to Hebrew custom must not be sold to any Mussulman. The slaughterers are compelled to bury any meat not sold to Jews, for "even the Christians," says honest Benjamin, "dare not buy it, fearing the mockery and insults of the Persians."

If a Jew enters a shop to buy anything, he is forbidden to inspect the goods; he must stand at a respectful distance and ask the price. Should his hand by accident touch the goods, he must take them at any price the seller chooses to ask for them. Sometimes the Persians intrude into the dwellings of the Jews, and take possession of whatever pleases them. Should the owner endeavour to defend his property, he runs the danger of atoning for his presumption with his life. Upon the least dispute between a Jew and a Persian, the former is immediately dragged before the Achund, and, if the complainant can produce two witnesses, the Jew is condemned to pay a heavy fine. If he is too poor to pay the penalty in money, he must pay it in person. He is stripped to the waist, bound to a stake, and receives forty blows with a stick. Should the sufferer utter the least cry of pain during the beating, the blows already given are not counted, and the punishment is begun afresh. Even the Jewish children, when they get into a quarrel with the children of Mussulmans, are dragged before the Achund, and punished with blows.

A Jew who travels in Persia is mulcted at every inn and caravanserai he enters. If he hesitates to satisfy the demands made upon him, the people of the place fall upon him and ill-use him until he yields to their rapacity. If a Jew shows himself in the streets during the days of mourning for the martyrdom of Hussein, he is sure to be martyred himself. The desire of gain, as Benjamin sagaciously remarks, is, however, the chief incitement to fanaticism in these parts, and new accusations are

daily and hourly raised against the Jews as an excuse for fresh extortions.[3]

Until quite recently the Guebres, the co-religionists of the Parsees of India, were as oppressed as Jews or Christians. Two or three years ago their High Priest was murdered in open day in the town of Yezd, and, though the murderers were well known, the governor of the town refused to take any steps for their apprehension. The active remonstrances of the wealthy and influential Parsees of Bombay, sustained by the representations of the British Legation, had, however, considerable weight at Teheran, and redress was promised. I do not know whether the guilty were punished, but the condition of the Guebres was taken into consideration by the Government, and a firman was issued guaranteeing them the free exercise of their religion and an equality of rights. The representatives of the ancient Magians are very few in number, and excite no political jealousy whatever. It is said that there are only 5000 of them all told; they reside, for the most part, in and around Yezd. Three or four families of Irani Parsees came from Bombay to Bushire, on board the Pachumba, on their way back to Yezd, now that things have taken a favourable turn for their community in their native land; they had migrated from Yezd during the great famine which afflicted Persia in 1874.

It must not be supposed from what we have seen of the deplorable condition of Persia, politically and socially,

[3] "Eight Years in Asia and Africa." By J. J. Benjamin II. Hanover, 1863.

that the Persians have not their good points. They are very intelligent, affable, and agreeable, and they would, in the opinion of those who know them best, be decidedly apt in the ways of civilization, if their Government were even as good as that of Turkey. Their military qualities are not comparable to those of the Osmanlis, but they are more ingenious and quick-witted, and are by no means averse to making money by trade or speculation, which, as we know, their more warlike neighbours think unworthy a man and a Moslem. A certain amount of education is diffused throughout the country. When moving about the narrow lanes of Bushire in the mornings, we could hear the boys reciting aloud their lessons in the schools attached to every mosque. Almost every child in Persia is taught to read and write. The instruction is not, indeed, of the best; so long as the boy can read a little of the Koran, and can write his name, he passes muster as a fair scholar; and of higher education there is little. There is great room for improvement, but the country is not so steeped in ignorance as might be expected where the material evidences of civilization are so deficient.

At Bushire we saw one of the finest infantry regiments in the Shah's service—that of Azerbaijan. The men were very robust and muscular, of good height, few being under five feet nine. But their uniform—a sort of blouse of blue cotton—was unmilitary and mean, though their pointed head-dress of black sheepskin somewhat redeemed them from the look of mere day-labourers or peasant-boors. In physique they had, I

think, the advantage of the Turkish line regiments I subsequently had the opportunity of seeing at Baghdad and Constantinople, but they were very far indeed from equalling the soldiers of the Sultan in "set-up" and military smartness. They seemed half-drilled, and were very slouching and careless in all their movements. The arms of the guard, piled in front of the tumble-down barracks, were in very bad order. The bayonets were covered with rust; and had apparently never been cleaned from the time they were distributed to the men. I need not say that there were no breech-loaders. Some field-pieces were to be seen in a shed; they were quite uncared for, covered with the dirt of the last march. Things military are not like this in Baghdad or in any of the other Turkish towns we shall visit later on.

Nevertheless, Persia enjoys throughout the East a reputation scarcely second to that of the Ottoman Empire itself as a great Mohammedan Power. The tradition of her greatness has survived, and she enjoys amongst the smaller nations and the independent tribes an influence out of all proportion to her present strength. She has undoubtedly the elements of greatness ready to the hand of a new Shah Abbas. English officers regard her cavalry material as far superior to that of the Turks. The Persians are admirable horsemen—far better than the Arabs, who can only ride over a flat country. The broken and rocky surface of a great part of Persia accustoms both horses and riders to getting over difficulties which the Arab, accustomed to gallop over level plains without an obstacle of any sort, could

not surmount. As infantry, however, the Persians are not equal to the Osmanli or the Arab. The Arabs, singularly enough, fight much better on foot than on horseback, and they are regarded as the best linesmen in the Ottoman army. The Persian infantry is badly trained and worse officered, and is spoken of with contempt by European officers. If it were differently organized and well led it might, however, redeem its character. Two or three English adventurers, who disciplined the troops of Shah Abbas the Great, enabled that prince to vanquish even the Osmanlis of the seventeenth century in pitched battles, and rendered the Persian name the most dreaded in all the East. The military material now lying unused in Persia may be, perchance, once again turned to great account.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SHAT-EL-ARAB AND BUSSORAH.

Entering the Shat-el-Arab—The Bar—The steamer driven through the mud—Great breadth of the river—The telegraph station at Fao—Ample depth of the Shat—A steam dredge for the improvement of the entrance to the river—The Turkish and the Persian banks—The Date Plantations on the Turkish side—Mohammareh—Visit of the Prince Governor—Bussorah—Look of Progress—Growing trade—Messrs. Lynch and Co.—Fertility of the land—Large tracts brought into cultivation—Facility of the process—The irrigation of the plantations—The Arabs as labourers—The town of Bussorah—Gardens along the banks of the creek leading to it—The grain trade—Wool—Export trade in dates—Population formerly very large—Midhat Pasha's project—Improved sanitary conditions—Curious custom of the Jews at Bussorah—Maagil—The Government share of the crops—Exportation to Jeddah—Great waste of corn—The Euphrates—Nassir Pasha repairs the banks of that river—Result—The old canals—Reservoirs for storing the flood waters—Nassir Pasha removed from office—His successor—The cultivation of the sugar-cane—Reclaiming land from the waste.

On the afternoon of the 30th of March the gale from the north-west having moderated, the Pachumba left Bushire for the Shat-el-Arab, and she arrived at the mouth of the great river the next morning at eight o'clock. It was then high tide, but there was only eleven feet of water over the bar, the strong gales from

the north-west, lately prevailing, having driven vast quantities of water out of the river into the Gulf and lowered its level. The steamer drew twelve feet and a half of water, but Captain Melville put on full speed and cut through the soft mud at the bottom. The bar is of great extent, and the Pachumba was nearly an hour getting clear of it and into deep water. The temperature fell from 62° to 58°, when we left the salt water and entered upon the fresh. When passing the bar there was nothing but a small black buoy to denote to the eye that we had left the Gulf and entered a river. No land was visible on either hand or ahead. All around we saw only what seemed to be the wide sea, yet underneath we had but from ten to eleven feet of water, and a few hundred yards east and west the depth was much less. We were steaming up the great river for an hour before it narrowed sufficiently to bring its low banks into view.

The Shat-el-Arab, once its bar is fairly passed, is a magnificent river with from five to six fathoms of water nearly all the way to Kurnah, the point of junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris, a hundred and forty miles from its mouth. Two hours after crossing the bar we got to Fao, the Gravesend of the Shat-el-Arab. Here the telegraph cable is landed, and there are two staffs of telegraph operators, one British and the other Turkish. The employés in the Turkish office are mainly Greeks, with a sprinkling of French and Belgians. The telegraph buildings form the whole town of Fao. The river is here as wide as the Thames at Gravesend, and

its muddy waters flowing between great expanses of level country give it a strong family likeness to the English river in its lower reaches. It is deep enough here, and for eighty or a hundred miles higher up, to float the biggest ironclads ever launched, but the bar effectually keeps out vessels drawing over twenty feet, and even those drawing but twelve feet can only get in at high tides. The Turks some time ago bought one of the Suez Canal Company's steam dredges, with a view to the improvement of the entrance to the river, but the machine got out of order, and nothing has been done to repair it. If a deep channel were once dredged the scour of the river would keep it clear, with very little assistance from the machine.

As we go up the river to Bussorah the banks become very pretty, being thickly planted with date-palms down to the water's edge. The Turkish shore is infinitely better utilized than the Persian. On the latter new plantations of date-trees are rarely to be seen, and the old trees form but a thin fringe most of the way. But on the Turkish side the date culture is carried on with great energy; young trees abound, and the plantations often extend for miles inland from the river. As we approach Bussorah, mulberry and other fruit-trees are to be seen amongst the date plantations, and the bright green of the fresh spring foliage is very pleasant to the eye.

About twenty miles below Bussorah, and on the opposite or eastern bank, we see the Persian town of Mohammerah, at the confluence of the Karun with the

Shat-el-Arab. Mohammerah would become one of the most flourishing cities in these parts in twenty years if the Persian government were capable of administering the country on European principles. But now it is only a collection of mud hovels, looking squalid and mean even as compared to Bussorah, which has not much to boast of. The Governor of Mohammerah possesses a pretty little steam yacht, and that is the only sign of Western civilization which was noticed as we passed his town. The Prince Governor of Fars is just at present on a visit to his Excellency—a visitation which will last until a sufficient sum is forthcoming to make it worth his Highness' while to go elsewhere. This squeezing process is practised openly and without the least disguise in the Shah's dominions, and it is carried out from the top downwards till the unfortunate fellah who has to pay for all is squeezed dry. It is a great pity that so fine a race, so intelligent and so capable of progress, should be so unintelligently governed. However there are signs of improvement even now in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital. Omnibuses have actually been got out to Teheran by the Shah!

We steamed up to Bussorah at twelve miles an hour, and arrived at half-past three in the afternoon. On the way we passed the Turkish corvettes, Iskanderieh and Broussa, which are English-built, and are trim enough. Bussorah and its surroundings—or rather the European residents' houses and places of business which we see from the river—look very bright and flourishing. The buildings are brick-built, and have glass windows

facing the outer world—evidences of civilization we had not seen, except at Kurrachee, since we left Bombay. The air was cold and sharp, the north-west wind still blowing.

There was a long delay on the part of the health-officer in giving the vessel pratique, and the evening coming on, I was unable to get on shore until the next morning. I then called on Mr. Robertson, the Vice-Consul, and upon Mr. Carter, lately the acting Vice-Consul, who is now, and for years past has been, best known as the White Sheikh, a title given to him in recognition of the fact that he has more influence with the Arabs of the surrounding regions than anybody else in Bussorah. From the Consul, the White Sheikh, and others, I learn what the appearance of the place led me to infer, that Bussorah is becoming prosperous; its exports of dates, and wool, and grain being very considerable. Fifteen years ago a single steamer used to come to Bussorah once in six weeks from Bombay. Now steamers come weekly from Bombay and monthly from London, and at times twelve steamers are to be seen loading in a line in the river off the town. Messrs. Lynch and Co., whose representative Mr. Carter is, have had a great deal to do with the development of this large and growing trade. They are the owners of the two English steamers—The City of London and the Blosse Lynch—which ply weekly between Bussorah and Bagdad. They own a very extensive tract of date country up the river; at Maagil, three miles above Bussorah, they have extensive warehouses for grain and wool, wool presses, and docks for the repair of the river

steamers. Several other houses, European and Armenian and Jewish, are also doing business here.

The produce of the soil is enormous. The country around and for forty miles northwards along the river banks is being gradually brought into cultivation. The land is perhaps the most fertile in the world, and the most easily worked. It is only two or three feet above the level of the Shat-el-Arab at its highest, and as there is a nine-foot rise of the tide, all that the cultivator has to do to secure the irrigation of his land twice a day is to dig a narrow channel through the soft alluvium at right angles to the river; the rising tide supplies abundance of water, and the thing is done. In some parts the quantity of saltpetre in the soil is so great that it is necessary to remove ten or twelve inches of the surface and throw it on one side. The subsoil not being charged with saltpetre, when that is reached all that remains to be done is to put in the seed. The usual process of opening up a tract of country is this. You buy from the Government or from a private owner a quantity of land usually at about five kerauns or four shillings an acre. If there are date-trees growing on a part of it, there is no further expense. You make an agreement with a sheikh who has two hundred fellaheen under him, to gather the dates, allowing him one-fourth of the crop—after the Government fifth is deducted—for his remuneration. He is bound to plant a certain number of young date saplings every year, the old trees supplying them abundantly. He may also grow wheat, barley, or any other crop he likes under the date-trees,

giving the proprietor a quarter of the crop if he has to find the seed, but one half of the crop otherwise. It is best to give him the seed, and bind him to cultivate so many acres, as the digging of the ground benefits the date-trees. The Arabs are not good labourers. They are lazy and careless. Wages, which were at the rate of sixpence a day, are now one shilling, and the supply of labour is always uncertain. When the time for the conscription draws near, numbers of the fellaheen go off into Persia to avoid it. The way in which the taxes are levied is often vexatious and extortionate, and as redress is uncertain, they take refuge in Persia from their oppressors. It is admitted, however, that bad as things are in Turkey, the flow of the population from the dominions of the Shah into those of the Sultan is much stronger than that from the Sultan's territories into the Shah's.

In the afternoon I proceeded in a bellem,—a long narrow boat, apparently hewed out of a tree,—up the creek, or canal, that leads to the town of Bussorah. The tide was at the flood, and the creek—about three miles long—was full of water. A roadway or towing-path goes along one bank, and there are brick houses and a few warehouses at intervals, but nearly the whole route lies between gardens in which, at that time, all sorts of fruit-trees were just budding into verdure and blossom. A delicious perfume from the yellow-flowered Acacia-Arabica recalled the lines in Lalla Rookh:—

> "The Acacia waves her yellow hair,
> Lonely and sweet, nor loved the less
> For blossoming in the wilderness."

Two lithe and active Arabs shoved the bellem forward with long bamboos, which they thrust against the bottom, or the banks of the creek. A considerable traffic was going on, and many cargo boats, carrying forty or fifty tons, were passed. When we got near the part of the town where the bazaars are situated, I left the bellem, and with one of the boatmen as a guide, made a tour of inspection. A large trade in grain was in progress. We saw thousands of tons of wheat in open spaces, the heaps being covered over with mats. I was informed that for some time previous the British India boats alone had taken some three thousand tons of grain southward from Bussorah weekly. The wool season had not yet come; after that there would be the date season, so that Bussorah must make a good deal of money in the course of the year. A large quantity of dates goes now to America and to England. The Black Country, strange to say, has a great fancy for that nutritious fruit. The bazaars are well-built structures, vaulted over with brick. But they are dismally dark, being lighted only by very small windows at the top. The streets are not quite so crooked and narrow as those of Bushire, but they are by no means what they might very easily be made. Midhat Pasha, when he was governor-general of Baghdad, formed a sort of municipal council to look after the sanitary improvement of the place, but it has no funds and no energy. It does little or nothing, except when some great official visits the town. Then the streets are swept and garnished, and the official is well pleased. The presence of the European

residents has, however, caused some of the worst abominations to be put down, and now it is possible to walk through the narrow streets without being reminded of the state of things at nightfall in Edinburgh in the good old times.

Bussorah is said to have contained a population of 300,000 formerly—an oriental way of stating that is was once very populous. But pestilence and war, and capture by the Persians, and recapture by the Imam of Muscat for the Sultan, reduced it to very modest proportions indeed. When the Persians possessed the town, at the close of the last century, they stretched a chain across the river to put a stop to the navigation. The Omanis with their fleet—a very strong fleet at that time—broke the chain and recovered Bussorah for the Turks. The city was originally founded in the seventh century, by one of the early caliphs, to facilitate the trade with the Gulf.

It is a great drawback that the city, instead of being built actually on the banks of the Shat-el-Arab, stands three miles away from that great river, and has to be reached by a canal which is almost dry when the tide is out. Midhat Pasha proposed to bring the city down to the river, and with that end in view he built government offices and a custom-house on its banks, and induced some of the inhabitants to build houses near them. The European firms have followed up this movement, and some fine warehouses, and many wharves, have been constructed on the banks of the river. The reconstruction of the town on the more open

site, three miles further away from the marshes behind the old city, would be a great gain, in a sanitary as well as a commercial point of view. The wind blowing over the marshes makes Bussorah unhealthy at times, but its reputation is much worse than the facts warrant, and it is growing less unhealthy from year to year as the country around is coming into cultivation.

At Bussorah we see many Jews, some of whom are engaged in business as merchants. The Jewish community in the beginning of the century amounted, it is said, to three thousand families, but the plague and emigration have reduced them to less than a tithe of that number. They have some customs peculiar to themselves, and a very curious one relating to funerals is described with great minuteness by the Moravian Jew already mentioned, who extended his travels into these parts. The body, he says, is borne in an open coffin on a bier hung with black, and amid chanting of funeral songs, the procession passes to the place of burial. They stop seven times on their way; and at each time of stopping the funeral procession walks round the coffin with prayers and singing, and each person throws a piece of money into an urn placed upon the corpse. At the seventh halt the priest lifts up the urn, and says: 'We know that no one in the world is free from the sin, Sera Lebathalah'—a cabalistic word signifying a mystic sin, or evil thought, or spirit, which produces myriads of dark fiends, who come after death, and torment the man, under the pretext that they are his children, and ought to have

part of his inheritance—'we therefore give to thee this money, in order that thou mayest let his body and his soul rest in peace. In the name of the Eternal and His Holy Word, and with the consent of the members of the congregation here present, we lay upon thee the Anathema, which shall compel thee to flee into wild and solitary regions, where thou canst no more persecute any one.'

On arriving at the burial-place they go in solemn procession round the grave, and having placed the body in it, return to the town as they came.

In the evening I went to Maagil, a busy little place on the banks of the river, some three miles above Bussorah, in compliance with the hospitable invitation of Mr. Carter. During the long pull up the river against the stream, we saw fresh evidences of the growing trade of this region. Little fleets of boats passed us, the boatmen chanting their Arab ditties. On the banks date-trees and mulberries abounded, and here and there rose large warehouses of recent construction. At Maagil there is a Turkish naval dockyard, and a steamer was being repaired at it. Close by the Austrian steamer Aretusa, chartered by the Turkish Government, was taking on board a cargo of grain for the consumption of the pilgrims at Jeddah, on the Red Sea, the port nearest to Mecca.

This grain is part of the Government share of the produce of the land under cultivation, received by way of rent. There being no certain market for it in the country, it is exported by the Government to Jeddah,

and sold to the pilgrims arriving at that port for Mecca, and a good profit is thus realized in ordinary years, when the pilgrims are numerous. The Government is often sorely perplexed to find a way of disposing of the vast quantities of grain which fall to its share every year. The troops are of use in consuming a certain proportion; they are abundantly supplied; but, ample as are their rations, they cannot possibly consume all that the Government fails to find a market for. Large stores of wheat and barley rot in the granaries, or are consumed by rats, or used as fuel, year after year. Of course this lamentable destruction of valuable food does not take place in the vicinity of towns like Bussorah or Baghdad, where it finds water-carriage and an outlet, and there is a considerable population. But I am told that in districts remote from the Shat-el-Arab and the Tigris wheat is used as fuel, that being the sole means of turning it to account. The total absence of roads, and, consequently, of wheeled vehicles, by which the corn could be taken at reasonable cost to the river-side, is the cause of this cruel waste. The means of inter-communication would not only enrich the country generally, but would add directly and immediately to the revenues of the Government, by providing it with a market for the hundreds of thousands of tons of now almost valueless cereals it has on hand after every harvest.

I was told by an Englishman long resident in the country that he was once at Hillah, dining with a Turkish official, when he was startled by the sound of

a building falling in with a great crash. His host reassured him by saying, "It is only one of the Government grain stores that has fallen. It often happens; the rats undermine the walls to get at the grain, and from time to time a building gives way. The grain here is of no value; we hardly know what to do with it. No one will buy it, for it would not pay to send it to Baghdad, and the people about here have more of their own than they can consume. So the rats do what they like with the stores; you have just heard them bring another to the ground!"

From the roof of the dwelling-house at Maagil I got a good view over the country lying behind the great fringe of date-trees, from four to six miles deep, which begins at Fao and extends in an almost unbroken line some forty miles north of Bussorah. The great alluvial plain behind this belt of verdure stretches away for an interminable distance like the boundless sea itself. Portions of it were covered with water that had come down from the Euphrates, which had burst its banks, 200 miles to the north-west. The whole region is little better than a marsh, owing to the overflowing of the Euphrates every season. The little irrigation canals employed in the date culture are ditches three or four feet wide and as many deep, and, when pushed far inland, they tap these Euphrates waters, which then rush out through them into the Shat-el-Arab. The scour sometimes widens and deepens the canals until a gunboat could float on their broad bosoms. I saw one large canal that had been so made, which was

at least thirty-five feet wide, and ten or twelve feet deep. If the floods from the northward were not provided with some vent of this kind, Bussorah would be quite as unhealthy as it is generally said to be, and it would stand a fair chance of being swept away altogether when the Euphrates comes down from the Armenian highlands more swollen than usual.

Bussorah was made a Waliat or Governor-Generalship, to render it worth the ambition of Nassir, the powerful Sheikh of the Montafik tribe, who paid a large sum at Constantinople for the post. During the three years he held the position, the tribe was insensibly brought under the control of the Ottoman Government. Nassir resolved to distinguish his administration by putting a stop to the inundations from the Euphrates. In order to restore the banks of that river, he ordered a general levy of labourers in the whole pachalik. Every one was obliged to go north, to the region where the banks had given way, or else to contribute to the expense. Even Europeans were not exempted from this obligation. The villages in the neighbourhood of the projected works were obliged to find accommodation and food for the requisitioned labourers. No pay was given to the latter or to any one else, and there was no attempt at proper organization. As a consequence, the provisions fell short, and there were very naturally some attempts at a strike. But the Montifik Sheikh, Pasha as he was, had sufficient energy to put down even a strike. He built a few of the refractory into the embankment, and declared that he would construct the whole embank-

ment of the bodies of the strikers, if they did not at once go on with their work. There was no arguing with an employer of this stamp, so the bitter task was proceeded with. The Arabs have great skill in constructing cheap and effective embankments. They make fascines of reeds or brambles firmly tied together with coir, and, placing them in position, dexterously interlace them; the mud of the river itself consolidates them into a wall of great strength, which will resist a flood that would sweep away the more costly and scientific structure of European engineers. The new embankment of Nassir Pasha was strong and well made, but unfortunately it was not well placed. He did not "humour the river," and give its waters free play and ample room. He narrowed the bed too much, and the consequence was that when the floods came down the Shat-el-Arab was swollen dangerously. Bussorah was in great peril, and large portions of the land along the river front were washed away and carried down into the Persian Gulf. The new embankment did not give way; it withstood the pressure for that year, and if it had been repaired it might have lasted indefinitely. But it was not repaired or looked after, and the next year's floods burst through it, and the country was laid under water as before. The lesson to be derived from this vigorous effort of Nassir Pasha to bind the Euphrates in a sort of strait-waistcoat ought not to be thrown away upon those who may be fired with a similar ambition in the near future. The Euphrates must be induced to keep its bed, and restrained from

converting whole provinces into mere marsh; but the fact must be recognized that when the snow in the distant Armenian hills melts, the quantity of water which has to find its way to the sea is sufficient to form several great rivers, each the size of the Euphrates. The complete network of canals, which covered not only Mesopotamia, but the country westward of the river, in the old times took off this surplus water, and reduced the periodic floods in the main stream to manageable dimensions. One and all of the remains of these ancient canals are above the general level of the surrounding plains; the high embankments rise, like double walls, some twenty or thirty feet above the surface of the soil. It is evident, therefore, that they were filled from the river when its waters rose, and they doubtless acted as vast reservoirs after its subsidence. Most probably they were provided with flood-gates at the points of junction with the river. The embankments are even yet, for the most part, intact; with very little trouble they could be thoroughly renovated, and put to their old use. The beds are choked with sand, and would have to be cleaned out; but when that is done these levels will be found still to be correct, neither the river nor the adjacent plains having sensibly varied in their respective altitudes. The Turks have cleared an old canal from Baghdad to Hitt, on the Euphrates, and, though the work has not been very effectively done, boats can go from the Tigris to the Euphrates when the rivers are at flood. Unfortunately, the nomad Arabs through whose territory this reopened canal passes are

not well in hand, and they levy black-mail so capriciously —sometimes taking boats and cargo altogether as their dues—that traders are afraid to use it to the extent that might otherwise be possible. But the fact has been fully established by actual experiment, that the old canals of the country can be cleared out and brought once more into service at very trifling cost. Besides restoring fertility to the plains through which they pass, and furnishing cheap and convenient means of transporting bulky produce, they would draw off the superfluous waters of the Euphrates when that river is at flood, and, by preventing the bursting of its banks, avert calamitous inundations. From all I could learn, it is very doubtful whether any system of embankment can be relied upon to keep the Euphrates within bounds, unless ample provision be made for drawing off and storing great part of the flood waters. And even the success of the attempt to keep all the waters of the river within its banks would be far from an unmixed gain, since it would almost infallibly lead to the flooding of the Shat-el-Arab, rendering the fertile garden-land along the banks of that magnificent stream uninhabitable, and very possibly sweeping away Bussorah altogether. This would be too heavy a price to pay even for the enforced stoppage of the periodic inundations along the course of the Euphrates. But if provision be made for the reception and utilization of the surplus water of that river, its embankment will not only preserve the adjacent country from the evils which now afflict it, but will have, further, the great advantage of

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rendering the Euphrates itself navigable to Hillah, and at certain seasons even to Birijik, near Aleppo. The scour of the stream will soon remove the obstructions which now render its navigation tedious, and even dangerous. Even as matters are, steamboats of lighter draught than those on the Tigris might, it is said, be profitably employed between Bussorah and Hillah and Mosseyib, and, when the river is at its highest, to Birijik itself. But the wasting away of the river banks has had such an injurious effect upon the main stream, filling it with dangerous shoals and shifting mud-banks, that attempts to place steamers on the Euphrates as they are upon the Tigris are regarded by Europeans and Turks alike as too hazardous. Once the river banks are permanently restored, however, the depth of the stream will be soon increased by the force of the current, which is seldom less than from four to five miles an hour, and is often much more considerable.

To return to Nassir Pasha. Having restored the banks of the Euphrates for a year in the despotic fashion above mentioned, and ruled the Pashalic generally in a very high-handed fashion, petitions were sent to Constantinople, praying for his removal. Though he had paid, it is said, the enormous sum of 70,000*l.* to influential personages at the Porte for his elevation to the Governor-Generalship of the newly-created Waliat of Bussorah, the allegations against him were too serious and too numerous to be disregarded even by the patrons whom his lavish expenditure had secured, and he was removed from office. His successor was

Abdoolah Pasha, the present Wali, who is a Kurd. Abdoolah soon after his appointment, wrote to the Khedive of Egypt, asking his Highness to send a quantity of Egyptian sugar-cane and some persons competent to superintend its culture. The Khedive telegraphed an answer to this request, while I was in Bussorah, stating that he would send 30,000 plants and some men who understood how to plant and nurse them. The soil and climate will, it is believed, suit the sugar-cane admirably. Cotton and indigo grow luxuriantly, but are little cultivated. Experiments have been made with poppies, and they are found to grow to perfection. But their culture appears to be beyond the patience of the Arabs, who do not like to take much trouble with anything. The Persians, who are much more industrious agriculturists, cultivate them, but they adulterate the opium to such an extent that the Chinese have a prejudice against it, and it cannot compete with the Indian opium. This is a mercy for which the Indian Finance Minister ought to feel grateful.

Behind Maagil I saw the process of reclaiming land from the waste in full operation. A ditch is dug from the river to the land to be brought into cultivation. Where there is a deposit of saltpetre, about a foot of the surface soil is removed and thrown aside into a heap. Then short suckers from the root of a date-tree are placed in the ground in regular lines about twenty feet apart. Wheat or lucern is sown, and there is nothing more to be done but to wait for the harvest. A date-tree bears four years after it is planted, and of late the

price has gone up six-fold, owing to the better markets which the opening of the Suez Canal has made accessible. The Arabs assert that there are seventy different species of date-trees along the banks of the Shat.

CHAPTER VIII.

UP THE TIGRIS.

Distance by river to Baghdad—Messrs. Lynch and Co.'s river steamers—Turkish steamers on the Tigris—The navigation of the Euphrates—High rates for merchandize and passengers from Bussorah to Baghdad—The deck of the Blosse Lynch—Arab Women—Kurna—The site of the Garden of Eden—View of the country along the banks—Abundance of game—Civil war among the Arabs—A defaulting Revenue farmer—River piracy—Arab encampment by the river—Inducements to the Nomads to settle—Cheapness of land—The government tithe—Few craft on the Tigris—Kufas—A sunken steamer—Prevalence of Ophthalmia and consequent blindness—Barbarous methods of treatment—Confidence in European doctors—Cutting the telegraph wires—Severe punishment by the Sheikhs—The twin cities—Cæsar's arch—Saltpetre manufactory at Seleucia.

At nine o'clock on the evening of the 3rd of April, I went on board the Blosse Lynch, a river steamer, bound for Baghdad.

The City of the Caliphs is five hundred and ten miles from Bussorah by the Shat-el-Arab and the Tigris, but as the crow flies, the distance is only some three hundred miles. The Blosse Lynch is one of the two steamers which Messrs. Lynch and Co. run upon the Tigris. The Turkish Government has seven steamers

trading in these waters, and the Comet, a steamer attached to the British Residency at Bagdad, makes the total number navigating the Tigris, ten. Of course the Comet does not, like the other boats, carry merchandise and passengers. Messrs. Lynch ran their first boat in 1863, at which time the Turks had already one boat on the line. The Turkish flotilla was the creation of Midhat Pasha, and it now pays about 8 per cent. on the money invested. The two steamers belonging to Messrs. Lynch yield a much better profit —25 per cent., I am told. Once a year the Turks send a steamer up the Euphrates when it is at its flood, but the voyage never pays its expenses, for its duration is beyond all reason, punctuality being unknown either in starting or the arrival. It goes to Birijik—a point not far from Aleppo, to which the river is navigable in spring. Doubtless if the Euphrates boat went regularly and at dates known beforehand, the venture would pay, but now no one knows within a month when the boat will start.

The Blosse Lynch is the largest boat on the Tigris, and is made somewhat on the model of the American river steamers, with a very spacious upper deck, high above the main deck, somewhat like the first floor of a house. This upper deck is forty-five feet in breadth at the paddle boxes—an immense width, exceeded by few of the large ocean-going steamers. The cabins below are very spacious, and there is a handsome saloon. The great width of beam has enabled the builders to reduce the draft of water to $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

There is room on board for 300 tons of cargo, and a thousand passengers—of course deck passengers for the most part.

The tedious voyage up the river, against the stream, lasts three days, and sometimes even eight days, according to the season; the current runs down at the rate of five knots an hour. When the river is low, and the nights dark, it is impossible to steam by night at all, or to go fast even by day. But when there is plenty of water the Blosse Lynch goes at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, if the current is not very strong. The voyage from Baghdad to Bussorah occupies on an average two days, the rapid current bringing the steamer down at great speed. The rates charged pay the Company very well. It costs about as much to send goods from Bussorah to Baghdad as to get them from London to Bussorah. First class passengers are charged six pounds without food; deck passengers fifteen shillings. There were about 200 passengers on board when I made the voyage. An artist might have filled his portfolio with the various and picturesque groups on the two decks. There were Arabs of the Gulf, and Arabs of the Desert; Mussulmans from India on pilgrimage to Kerbela; Jews of Baghdad, returning to their homes, after a business excursion to Bussorah; there were Christians of Baghdad, and Christians of Mosul, all looking as unlike Christians as a costume of flowing robes, and bright colours, could make them. Arab women, closely veiled, squat about the deck; sometimes the veil falls, and you see rings in their noses and bright

blue lines elegantly tattooed on the chin and forehead, and vertically across the lips. They are not at all as good-looking as their husbands and brothers, who have no need to tattoo themselves to acquire a fictitious beauty. The men during the voyage sat still, and smoked the caleoon, and drank coffee. They formed little groups on carpets or mats, and only stirred at the hour of prayer, when they got up to their devotions, which they performed with great gravity and earnestness. I did not notice any of the women praying. The crew of the Blosse Lynch were all Chaldeans, Christians from Mosul. They were big, muscular fellows, very hard-working, and amenable to discipline.

About fifty miles above Bussorah, at a place called Kurnah, the Euphrates and the Tigris unite their waters, which, as I have said, thence flow in a united stream for about 140 miles to the sea, under the name of the Shat-el-Arab. At Kurnah is the site of Paradise, according to the traditions of these parts, and I hoped to be able to visit the garden of our first parents. But unfortunately the steamer arrived there during the night, and I could see nothing but the outlines of two or three brick buildings; the vociferations of a number of Arabs, and the barking of innumerable dogs told that the place was inhabited. At daylight the Blosse Lynch proceeded up the Tigris, which is here about half a mile wide, rolling its turbid waters between banks scarcely a foot above their level. At some places the wash from the steamer went over and watered the grass. Marshes covered much of the land on both sides;

the damp, sickening smell from the decaying vegetation was very pronounced, until the sun rose high and dissipated the vapours. Rice-fields, cultivated by the Arabs, were seen at intervals, and on the dryer land, green corn waved. There was not a tree to break the wearisome monotony of the immense plains which rolled past us as in a panorama while we steamed on hour after hour. The soil is rich enough to produce corn to feed whole nations, but except at rare intervals it is turned to no account. Wild pigs are to be seen in the reeds along the banks. Pelicans of snowy whiteness are in the pools: I counted a dozen in one flock. Snipe and game of all kinds abound. We passed the spot where, in 1874, a lion and three lionesses, surrounded on a bank by an inundation, were shot from the deck of one of the river steamers. Captain Clements, who now commands the Blosse Lynch, took part in the battue. He tells me that the fury of the animals, and their desperate charges in the direction of the steamer as they were fired at, were things to be remembered. One of the lionesses leaped into the water and swam for the steamer; she was killed alongside. Lions are getting scarce now in this region. Pelicans will soon get scarce, too, for it is found that their downy breasts make admirable muffs. Last year thirty bales of pelicans' skins were exported to Russia, each skin costing a shilling. The war appears to have interfered with the traffic this year. A little inland these birds are to be seen in flocks of hundreds; the marshes are whitened with them as they descend to look for the fish on which they live.

Were turkeys introduced from America? I have often read that they were, and that they happened to derive their name from the fact that the merchants who introduced them into England were "Turkey merchants," i. e. merchants who traded with Turkey and other outlandish places which were very far away. But it appears that this theory, in so far as it is based on the notion that turkeys are of purely American origin, must be given up. Wild turkeys abound in the region between the Tigris and the Persian hills. They are often hunted with hawks, and a Dutch gentleman on board the Blosse Lynch told me that he had himself seen the sport, and that it is very exciting. The turkey always shows fight, and if the hawk does not mind what it is about, it gets the worst of the encounter and is killed. Once the turkey gets above the hawk, the fate of the latter is sealed. The mere blow of the turkey's wing is sufficient to dispose of its assailant as effectually as would the kick of a horse.

A few miles above Kurnah we came to a part of the river where two brothers were fighting for the supremacy over the Beni Lam tribe. When the Comet was going up the Tigris the previous week with Colonel Nixon, the British Political Agent, on board, they made use of her as a screen, moving along as she moved, and firing at each other when they got a chance. This added greatly to the interest of the voyage to those on board. A few miles still higher up, the Abou-bin-Mahomed tribe was giving trouble. A sheik of that tribe farmed the revenue of the country around from the

Government for two years. He paid in the first six months' collections, but when he had collected the next six months' taxes, he deferred cashing-up, and afterwards, collecting the following year's taxes, he made off with the whole to the inland marshes. It is not easy to follow him there, and he has about 40,000*l.*, which the Ottoman Government does not see its way to recover. As he is in disgrace, some of his countrymen naturally think that whatever is done amiss in this region will be set down to him, so they have profited by the opportunity to rob the grain and other cargo boats going down the river. A fortnight ago they robbed a boat and killed nine men on board of her. A Government steamer coming up the river soon after this outrage had been committed, fired upon the perpetrators, but without much effect. Now cargo boats are afraid to venture down the river without a convoy. They therefore wait until forty or fifty get together, when they pay a Turkish steamer to escort them past the territory infested by the Abou-bin-Mahomed. At Ezra's Tomb, a couple of hours farther up the river, we saw a little fleet of cargo boats waiting for others to come down and join them, and the Turkish gun-boat lying close by until she was wanted. If chance puts the Turks in possession of any of the Arabs who took part in these piracies, they will certainly hang the delinquents. But it is not thought likely that they will just now take any active measures to bring the scoundrels to justice. One contumacious sheik of this tribe states that he has taken as many grain boats as he wants, and that he will now seize a Turkish steamer;

he will not meddle, he declares, with either of the English boats. The country is nearly denuded of troops, and it is very difficult to chastise such insolence without an adequate force. But piracy on the river has of late years been comparatively rare. The last people that were hanged at Bussorah were some Arabs who took part in an audacious attack upon the British Indian steamer Cashmere. They jumped on board her at night, struck the heads off a couple of the unfortunate firemen whom they met on deck, and got possession of a sum of Rs. 48,000, about which they evidently had received certain information beforehand. Nine of them were hanged, and river piracy received a check from which it is only now beginning to recover.

Every ten or twenty miles along the banks we see Arab encampments of the rudest kind. The huts are built of reeds and mats, and are the creations of an hour. The Arab boys run along the grass, shouting to the passengers on the deck of the steamer, who throw them apples, onions, and cabbages, which are vigorously scrambled for. When these gifts fall into the water the naked imps plunge in fearlessly and swim after them, regardless of the swift current and the wash of the steamer. Sometimes the men, and even the women, join the boys in this exciting chase for the *backshish* of the good-humoured passengers. The women, who would keep their faces veiled close, doubtless, on board the steamer, often throw aside their abbas, or cloaks—their only garments—and dash into the river to swim after an onion or a cabbage, which they bear back in wild

triumph, shouting in the exuberance of their satisfaction.

In the lower reaches of the river the Arabs appear to have herds of buffaloes only: higher up we see sheep and horses as well as cattle. The sheep do not always belong to the tribes. Wealthy natives of Baghdad are the owners of many of the flocks: they give them into the charge of the Arabs to pasture at a fixed price per head. Most of these Arabs are now amenable to the Turkish authority, and have dealings with the merchants of the towns. It is said, though they are not by any means incapable of a little business-like cheating, they on the whole observe good faith in their bargains. If goods or money be entrusted to them, they will conscientiously acquit themselves of the obligation incurred. They have all to pay tribute to the Government, which exacts one-third of the crops grown upon Government land capable of river irrigation, and one-fifth of those grown upon private property. A rent has also to be paid for land used for grazing purposes. Thousands of acres are sown with corn or rice every year by the Arabs, and a good deal of grain is now exported. Nearly the whole of the land on either side of the river might be turned up with the plough to-morrow, if only the ploughs and the ploughmen were available. Grass grows luxuriantly as far as the eye can reach, and where grass grows on these plains any thing will grow. The patches of white earth seen at intervals, where the saltpetre on the surface arrests vegetation, are of no great extent, and sometimes for

hours we see none of them. As we get farther to the north, on the 4th and 5th of April, the banks become higher, and consequently irrigation becomes more difficult. The canals must be made deeper—seven or eight feet, instead of three or four—and the water must be raised by Persian wheels, but in every other respect the country is as capable of profitable cultivation along the banks of the Tigris as it is along the Shat-el-Arab. As the summer advances the grass becomes brown and withered, but there are patches which are always green, and on these flocks and herds graze. When irrigation is properly carried out, the whole of this vast and fertile territory will yield an unlimited supply of food for man, and abundant revenue for the state. If a couple of millions of Hindus were to colonize the banks of the Tigris! The country even now is improving. During the last fifteen or twenty years the Arabs have been brought into something like subordination, and cultivation is gradually extending. But on the 500 miles of water-way between Bussorah and Baghdad there are only four places at which it is worth while for the river steamers to stop, even for a few minutes. For 150 miles before reaching Baghdad the steamer does not stop at all. And this, through the midst of boundless plains which are the most fertile and the most easily cultivated in the whole world!

At some points, however, the Arab villages of reeds and mats are being replaced by little towns built of more permanent materials—sun-dried bricks and mere mud. Many of the Bedouins who come yearly to the

Tigris to water their flocks in the dry season, settle there, and gradually take to agriculture. In the course of a generation or two they give up their wandering habits and even find their way into Baghdad, or some other great town, in search of employment. To encourage them to settle, the Turkish Government, acting on the advice of Midhat Pasha, made some few years ago important changes in regard to the land-tax. When the Government sells land which can be irrigated from the river, it retains a right to a fifth of the produce. But half of this tax may be capitalized and redeemed by payments in easy instalments, and then the landowner has to pay only one-tenth of the produce of his lands as a yearly tax. As the land is sold at little more than a nominal price—3*s.* 6*d.* or 4*s.* an acre generally—the inducement to buy the fee simple and settle down as a cultivator is very great, for the purchaser need give but a tenth instead of a third of his crops to the Government. If the purchaser does not dwell upon his land, and leaves it altogether uncultivated for three years, it lapses to the state. Under this system a considerable quantity of desert land has been brought into permanent cultivation. Government land, which cannot be irrigated by river water, but is dependent for its fertility on the uncertain rain, pays but a tenth of the crop as a tax. There is a small tax on each date-tree in the Pashalic of Baghdad; at Bussorah the date tax is levied not on each tree, but on the land on which the trees grow; it is not heavy.

When steaming up the Tigris day after day, one is

struck with the strange fact that so little use is made of the magnificent rush of water for purposes of traffic. From the time we left Bussorah on a Tuesday evening, till we came to an anchor at Baghdad after dusk on the following Saturday night, we passed only two little steamers and a couple of score of buggalows of no great size. Of bellems, or small boats, I saw perhaps a dozen, and of the round wicker baskets coated with bitumen, of the kind which has been on this river for the last two or three thousand years, I counted seven. These basket-boats or "kufas" are wonderfully convenient. They are generally eight or ten feet in diameter, and will take fifteen or twenty men across the river. One small paddle drives them along at a considerable speed: they present no broadside to the swift current, and can be sent forward by a rotatory movement with very little exertion. Some of them are represented on the Nineveh bas-reliefs carrying chariots across a river; they can carry with safety anything that can be crammed into them; it is impossible to sink them. There are a good many at Baghdad and higher up the river. Many of the buggalows that come past are built of light wood thickly coated with bitumen, which covers them like a smooth black hide.

The 6th of April was cold and bright, the day or two previous having been cloudy and comparatively warm, with a southern wind.

The reaches of the river become longer as we go north. For a good half of the distance between Kurnah and Baghdad the river is simply a zigzag. After we pass

Amarah—the southern boundary of the great Pashalic of Baghdad—the stream becomes very broad, sometimes it is a mile and a half from bank to bank. The banks become ten and fifteen feet high. Irrigation is carried on as we approach Baghdad by means of an apparatus worked by bullocks, for lifting the water out of the river up to the surface of the land. On the Saturday we passed the spot where, nearly two years ago, the Dijala, the predecessor of the Blosse Lynch, was sunk by being driven by the current upon the remains of a buggalow, which she had herself sent to the bottom two years before. The Arabs regard the fate of the steamer as a judgment. All efforts to float the unlucky Dijala proved unavailing, although divers and apparatus were brought out from England to lift her. The Blosse Lynch was ordered of Messrs. Rennie and Co. of London, to replace her, and was designed on a somewhat ambitious scale for a river so capricious as the Tigris. Steel and cast iron are used throughout to combine strength with lightness. She cost 22,000*l.* before she was put together at Maagil, near Bussorah, and the putting together took several thousand pounds more. She is a fine vessel, and has great speed when there is plenty of water in the river to float her. But when the Tigris is low it is difficult to get her through the shallows: her cargo has to be taken out and put on the bank till she floats over; she is then reloaded and goes along into the next reach, where the same operation is repeated. That is the penalty she pays for her great length—240 feet—and her width of beam. However, the river is not

often so low as to occasion all this trouble, though it is always low enough to render very careful navigation necessary.

Walking about on the upper deck amongst the groups of Persians, Arabs, Baghdadis and others, one notices that an unreasonable percentage of the passengers are blind of an eye. We have read in the Arabian Nights of the Three Calenders, the sons of princes, each blind of the right eye, who entered Baghdad together on a certain occasion. The coincidence of the three being blind of an eye has in all ages struck the untravelled European child as somewhat strange. But I have seen so many people blind of an eye since I left the shores of British India to visit the more unsophisticated countries lying north-west of them, that it would now seem to be a singular circumstance if three individuals came together at Baghdad or any town in the neighbourhood, who counted six eyes amongst them. Ophthalmia, aggravated by want of proper medical treatment and a wonderful faith in most disastrous modes of treatment which would make a medical man's hair stand on end, is the cause of this great destruction of vision. Dr. Ross, the surgeon to the Residency at Bushire, told me that a favourite remedy for all eye diseases is a copious application of tobacco juice. There are other remedies in which the oriental mind has faith, but this is the chief along the Gulf and in Persia. Of course the eyes so treated seldom revert to the *status quo ante*. As a rule one or the other becomes hopelessly blind. When matters come to this pass the only resource is to

go to any European doctor who may happen to be within reach. If he fails to bring back light to the sightless orb, the patients think themselves much aggrieved. They have done their part in putting their prejudices in their pocket and coming to him, and yet he does not cure them! There is untold misery and waste of life in these regions, which will be considerably diminished when the native hakeems are abreast of their European brethren in therapeutics. The natives have generally wonderful confidence in the European doctor. They regard his powers of healing as nearly, if not altogether, magical, and they submit readily to all surgical operations, excepting amputation. But they would much rather die than lose a leg or an arm. They appear to suffer much less than Europeans when under the knife, bearing without flinching the most uncompromising incision. Their wounds heal promptly, owing no doubt to their blood being unheated by alcohol or high living. Dates and wheaten bread form the staple of their diet; sour milk is a favourite drink, and mutton or fish are occasional luxuries. The Arabs do not cultivate green vegetables or fruit in any great quantities, at all events for their own use. They seem to have a prejudice against them.

As we were coming up the river, we learned that some Arabs had cut the telegraph wires of the local line between Bussorah and Baghdad. It is difficult to know why this outrage was committed. When first the telegraph was established, the Arabs used to cut the lines for the sake of the wire, which made very pretty brace-

lets. But the Sheik of the Montifik tribe being remonstrated with, quickly put an end to the practice by chopping off all wrists wearing wire bracelets. The Arab Sheiks are very cruel in their punishments, and often very oppressive in their rule. Among the Turks even the bastinado is now a thing of the past. They do not impale or build up in walls; they hang and imprison according to law.

The courts which try cases are reproached by the Europeans in these parts with being too lenient; they are not taxed with over-severity. But the Arab Sheiks exercise a wild justice of their own over their wild followers. I have heard of their covering up a culprit in reeds and bitumen, and setting him on fire. I have mentioned the case of the sheik who walled up a robber in the Government-house at Linga, and the Prince Governor at Shiraz inflicts that frightful punishment in all cases of highway robbery. The Arabs do not appear to be very different from the Persians in these things. They only show badly when compared with the Turks, who have profited to a much greater extent than is generally supposed by their contact with European civilization.

In the afternoon, when about five hours from Baghdad by the river, and three hours from it by land, we came to the site of Ctesephon and Seleucia—el Madein, or the "Twin Cities" of the Arabs. Seleucia was built on the western bank of the Tigris by Seleucus, one of Alexander's generals, as the capital of the kingdom which he carved out of the great conqueror's vast

empire. Its rise was the ruin of Babylon, and it became one of the greatest cities of the world. Ctesephon was built on the opposite bank, on a great peninsula formed by a bend of the Tigris. It was the capital of the Parthian empire, and was the seat afterwards of the Sassanian dynasty. When the Arabs, a few years after the death of Mohammed, prostrated the Persian kingdom at the battle of Cadesia, they marched upon Ctesephon and sacked it. The royal palace was then one of the wonders of the world, and the carpet which covered the floor of the hall of audience was sent to the Caliph Omar as a trophy worthy of him alone. But he had it honestly cut up and divided amongst the captors, and it was, of course, ruined. When Baghdad was founded, or more properly, refounded subsequently by Al-Mansor, Ctesephon was used as a quarry for materials for the new capital. The Caliph ordered the great palace to be demolished to furnish materials for a new one for himself, but it was found to be impossible to carry out his orders, the pile was so stupendous. Consequently, the Tak Kesra, or "Cæsar's Arch," is standing to this day, and is visited by every traveller who passes this way. Captain Clements obligingly stopped the Blosse Lynch for a few minutes to put me and another passenger on shore at one side of the neck of the peninsula on which Ctesephon stood, in order that we might walk across and see the great ruin, while the steamer was making her way round the peninsula. A brisk walk of three quarters of an hour across the green sward and through brambles brought us to the building,

which, standing alone in the level plain, looks even more vast than it is. Great ramparts of sun-dried brick still partly enclose a space, and represent, no doubt, the citadel.

Adjacent to the palace, and about a league to the eastward, is a long line of similar ramparts which doubtless enclosed the city on that side. The palace is more than half ruined, but the grand façade is nearly intact, and the centre hall can even now be admired in its original proportions, though part of the arched roof has fallen in. The façade is 450 feet long and 100 feet in height. There are niches with cornices and mouldings in tiers over the whole front, and near the top is a row of windows. In the centre is the great hall, 106 feet in height, and seventy-five feet in width. The depth of the hall is 150 feet. In height and span the arch is said to be unequalled in the world. Near the line from which the arch springs are two rows of pipes communicating directly with the outside. There are others in the arch itself. It is not easy to say what these pipes were intended for: possibly for ventilation. Arched passages at right angles to the great hall give egress from it. There is a similar passage at the end farthest from the entrance. The vast front of the great hall is wholly open to the external air, and there is no appearance of any wall having ever existed at that part of the great hall. The whole building is of brick of the best quality, and the walls at the base are twenty-two feet thick. There are several rents in the side walls supporting the arch, and some of the arch itself has fallen in. A couple of

the rents are new, and the foundation of the part of the façade which buttresses the southern front of the arch has recently sunk. The Arabs have added to the mischief by stealing the bricks from the accessible portions of the walls some six or eight feet just above the ground-line. They have removed the bricks all round, inside and out of the building, to a depth varying from two to three feet. The overhanging bricks are consequently destitute of support, being retained in their places only by the excellent mortar which binds them to the mass of the wall. The days of this magnificent pile are, I am afraid, numbered. A few more rainy seasons, and the arch will fall to the ground which it has overshadowed for ages. Within the last five years portions of it have fallen, and who knows how much of it will stand erect for another five? It is very saddening to see this great palace, which has survived for a thousand years the city of which it was once the centre and ornament, now preparing in its turn to vanish from the earth, and be as if it had never existed. The verse of Ossian seems to float over the great arch awaiting its doom: "The traveller shall come; he that saw me in my beauty shall come; his eyes shall search the field; they shall not find me."

The city of Seleucia is like that of Ctesephon, minus the Tak Kesra. There are some ramparts of earth or sun-baked bricks, and a few mounds wherefrom coins and sometimes coffins are dug out; nothing more. The Turkish Government has erected a saltpetre manufactory on the banks of the river, where the raw material which

is found on the surface of the soil is prepared for use at powder works in Bagdad. A few miserable Arab encampments are scattered over the plains which were at one time covered with the abodes of millions, and they do not fill the void.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CITY OF THE CALIPHS.

Baghdad—The Bazaars—The Streets—The houses—Serdaubs—The spring—View of the city from a minaret—Overflow of the Euphrates—The citadel and the barracks—Trophies taken from the Persians—The plague—Outbreak last year—Causes and only preventatives—Education in Baghdad—The Jewish school—Examination of the pupils—Prejudices against Frankish learning—Progress of enlightenment—Turkish and Christian schools—His Excellency Kadree Pasha—Visit to the Residency—The late Governor-General—Why recalled—Serious grain riots—Redif Pasha's government—Midhat Pasha—His beneficial administration—Abuses—Corruption of subordinates—Necessity for firmness.

We arrived at Baghdad after nightfall, and thus missed the fine view of the city as it is approached from the river. The kufas at once swarmed round the steamer to take off the passengers, who were rapidly floated away in basketfuls. I remained on board for the night, and the next morning Colonel Nixon, the British Political Agent, very kindly sent to the steamer for me, inviting me to stop at the Residency. As I had not as yet sent my letters of introduction on shore, I imagined that my arrival was unknown, but my new-found friends at Bussorah had very thoughtfully sent word on, and Colonel Nixon, with the hospitality for which he is noted, had not lost

a moment in sending a kawas to bring me to the Residency. I had already, indeed, received an invitation from one of the Europeans living in Baghdad. Hospitality is one of the institutions of the country, and it is the more welcome as hotels are unknown. A Greek had quite recently opened a sort of hotel in Baghdad, but no one seemed to know its whereabouts or pretensions.

On my way to the Residency I found the bazaars to be long and broad, well built of brick, and arched over so as to exclude the sun. The ordinary streets are narrow, and for the most part unpaved, but they are kept tolerably clean. The houses are all built on the same plan; there is a square courtyard in the centre, around the four sides of which the rooms are built in two or three stories, some of them being quite open to the courtyard, from which come the light and air. Few windows look out on the narrow, dismal streets. The roofs are all flat, and the population sleep upon them during the summer. While the great heats last, the citizens of Baghdad spend the day in the serdaubs—underground rooms which the prosaic might call cellars. "Serdaub" is a compound Persian word signifying literally "cold water," it being the practice in the cities of Iran to keep ice—"cold water"—stored in cellars, which, being thus rendered cool, become places of refuge from the intolerable heat. The nights are nearly always cool, even in summer, so the serdaubs are abandoned in the evening and a general migration takes place from the cellars to the roofs. Scorpions of a very venomous kind abound in these serdaubs, and add much to the

discomfort of those who seek refuge there during the heat of the day; they are by no means well lighted, small windows, near the top of the walls, letting in only a minimum of daylight, so as to exclude as much of the external heat as possible. The air is, I am told, always "muggy" and unpleasant in these underground apartments.

On the other hand, Baghdad above ground enjoys a very pure and wholesome air, which is constantly renewed from the surrounding desert. During six or eight months the climate is as near perfection as any to be found on this planet. There is even ice in midwinter, and the autumn and spring are lovely. May is not the hottest, but it is the most unpleasant, month, for insects of all kinds come forth in myriads and render life a burden. But June's fiercer sun they cannot stand, and when July and August drive the citizens to the serdaubs all insects die an unpitied death. The intense dry heat kills them. I chanced to arrive when all is loveliest in the fields and flowers around Baghdad. In the beginning of April the air is perfumed by orange blossoms; the hawthorn is in bloom, violets are not wholly extinct, and crocuses are still to be seen in cool and shady nooks. The green of the young spring foliage is of the freshest: birds sing in the branches, and turtle and ring doves on mosque and minaret make the air vocal. The mornings and evenings are cool, not to say cold, and even the midday sun has as yet no terrors for the traveller.

There is a tall minaret, which has outlasted its mos-

que, built by the Caliph Mustansic in 1235, situated in the centre of the town, from which a splendid view of the city, its gardens, the river, the Mesopotamian plain to the west, and the country eastwards towards the Persian hills, can be obtained. The minaret is the most ancient as well as the highest in Baghdad, and being more or less ruinous and quite unattached, unbelievers are free to ascend it. The entrance is high up, and to reach it you have first to get on the top of a wall by the help of a ladder, and then, the ladder being placed on one leg, as it were, on the wall, and held fast by an Arab willing to earn a right to backshish, you mount and scramble in at a doorway over head as best you can. The winding stairs which lead thence upwards are encumbered with guano in tons, the product of countless pigeons which make the minaret their home. This valuable manure, which has a very powerful odour, is in places over a foot deep, and the foot sinks in it at every step.

However, in due time one comes out into the pure air above. Baghdad lies below and around. It looks like a level plain composed of the flat roofs of houses honeycombed with narrow ditches. These ditches you know to be streets. Above the general level rise the high domes of mosques, and a profusion of minarets. Domes and minarets are all covered with encaustic tiles, the prevailing colours being blue and green. In the courtyards of many of the more important houses the date-palm and mulberry trees are companions. Part of the city stands on the western bank of the river, and a

MOSQUE OF OMAR, BAGHDAD.

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picturesque bridge of boats leads to it. The Tigris here is very wide and deep and flows in a straight line for some miles. Gardens and groves mark the course of the river, north and south, but the plains on the east and on the west are treeless, trackless wastes. Water gathering in great lakes to the westward shows that the Euphrates has again this year burst its banks and is about to inundate the plain and make Baghdad sick with fever in the autumn. The banks were burst last year but were repaired; they have now given way again and further expense will have to be incurred. As the level of the Euphrates is higher than that of the Tigris, there is some occasion for anxiety lest it should quit its own bed for good and come to share that of the eastern river, drowning the western half of Baghdad on the way. It is difficult to make the banks of the Euphrates sufficiently strong, as there is no proper foundation for the work. A canal recently excavated adds to the mischief by letting the water into the plain, where it cannot be easily controlled. The general result is, that extensive marshes are being formed between the Tigris and Euphrates, which make Baghdad much less healthy than it was formerly.

Around the city on the eastern circumference, are the old walls, now for the most part dismantled. The bricks of which they were built used at one time to be given to the troops in lieu of their pay, to sell at any price they might command in the market. But that was before the creation of the present efficient army. From the minaret we can see, standing out above the

other buildings, the great citadel, which is in very fair condition, and the splendid barracks erected only a few years ago.

I subsequently visited the citadel and the barracks, and the order and neatness prevailing throughout, were very creditable to the military authorities. The barracks are casemated but are lofty and well ventilated. The soldiers are for the most part young, having been called out during the recent war. They wear a blue Zouave uniform and look very tough and serviceable. In the citadel are some curious brass cannon taken from the Persians, when the Sultan Murad recovered the city from them in 1638. There are bas-reliefs on the pieces representing a man stabbing a lion. A British gun is also amongst the curiosities, but how it came there I could not learn.

This year fortunately the city is free from the plague. Dr. Colvill, the Surgeon to the British Residency, has very laboriously investigated the causes and consequences of the outbreaks of last year and the year previous. In every case the disease first appeared in the villages situated on the marshes around Hillah, on the Euphrates. The mortality in Baghdad in 1877 was about 5000. The Jews kept an exact register of the deaths in their community, which numbers 20,000, and they lost 1200. The population of Baghdad fluctuates, but it may be set down as 80,000 in ordinary times, when the number of pilgrims to the neighbouring shrines is not very great. The disease generally manifested itself first by an enlargement of the glands under the arm;

fever then set in, and the patient died in a few hours. The poor principally suffered, not so much, however, because they were poor as because they lived surrounded by filth and breathed vitiated air. The overcrowding in the poorer quarters of the town is very great. The disease attacked Mussulmans, Christians, and Jews, indiscriminately. The authorities endeavoured to enforce a very objectionable species of quarantine, keeping immured all the occupants of a house in which a case occurred. This would of course have led to the destruction of all who had the misfortune to be living in the house at the time. Dr. Colvill pointed this out and the Jewish rabbis, by his advice, got their people to migrate almost en-masse into the desert. All who had already become infected were struck down after removal, and most of them died, but the plague did not spread amongst the rest. It disappeared from want of the pabulum of filth and foul air on which alone it seems to exist. The Christians and the Mussulmans in many instances followed the example of the Jews, and went out into the pure air of the desert. The plague ceased, and this year it has not returned. Dr. Colvill observed that few persons were attacked who slept on bedsteads, even in rooms where people sleeping on the floor were carried off. The presence of a plague-stricken person in a large well-ventilated house was not a cause for uneasiness; the other inmates were almost certain to escape unscathed. But if the number of the stricken were increased, until the air became partially vitiated or tainted, then those constantly inhaling it were almost

sure to be attacked. Cleanliness, and plenty of fresh air are the best and indeed the only preservatives against the plague. The great heat of summer always puts an end to the visitation; the serious ravages only take place in the spring or autumn. It is doubtless due to the great heat prevailing during the three-fourths of the year in India, that the plague rarely visits that peninsula. On one occasion it commited great ravages in the north-west of India, but at the approach of the hot season it disappeared.

A good deal is being done for the education of the rising generation in Baghdad. Not the least important of the educational agencies at work is the Jewish school, founded in 1864, by the Alliance Israelite Universelle of Paris. Messrs. David Sassoon and Co., of Bombay, gave a sum of 2000*l.* for the erection of the fine building in which the work of instruction is now carried on. The director is Mr. S. Garat, a native of Baghdad, who was educated at Paris. There are at present 172 scholars—two being girls—and the number is increasing. The instruction given is of the best modern kind. Arabic is the mother tongue of the Baghdad Jews, and the pupils are taught how to write and speak that language grammatically. They are also taught Hebrew, Turkish, and French; within the last few months English has been added to the curriculum, at the suggestion of Colonel Nixon, who pointed out that as many of the boys would seek employment in the offices of Jewish merchants in India and China that language would be essential to their success in life. I

went to the school to be present at the first examination of the boys in English. Mr. A. Martin, the dragoman of the British Residency, was invited to act as examiner. The French Consul and his Excellency the Governor-General also sent their interpreters to examine the boys in French and Turkish. None of the boys had been learning English for more than nine months. Their teacher was a young Baghdad Jew, Mr. Michael, who had received his education in Bombay at the Jesuit College. His pupils did him credit. Many of them spoke and read English with wonderful fluency, and some of them wrote to dictation without an error of spelling or punctuation. Most of them had been learning French before they began the study of English, and they all declared that their knowledge of French greatly helped them in acquiring our more difficult tongue. The French dragoman examined the boys in French. Mr. Garat himself was their teacher, and he has certainly achieved great things with them. They speak French with singular purity of accent and expression.

A little girl of eleven, Khatoum Luron, displayed great intelligence, and prattled her French in the prettiest way. Her father, an Austrian Jew, took a great part in the establishment of the school, and has a hand in its management. Her mother is a Jewess of Baghdad. I may here remark by way of parenthesis that the city of the Caliphs is very fatal to the European bachelor; the Baghdad beauty ensnares him before he is aware. Nearly all who settle in the city marry

ladies of Baghdad. The Armenians and Jewesses are remarkably handsome, the former being so wondrous fair, that they would be accounted exceptionally so even amongst Europeans.

But to revert to the school. When first it was founded, great difficulties were encountered amongst the conservative Jews of the place, who imagined that the faith of Abraham might suffer if new-fangled notions were introduced from Frangistan. Few pupils could be got together, and the whole affair was so disheartening that the principals of the school were constantly giving up the task in disgust. But now the parents have come to see the advantages of book-learning; and boys are sent to school more freely. The little fellows themselves—bright vivacious boys—all wearing the Turkish fez—seem to like the fun. Some Christians and even two or three Moslems are amongst them. The Turks have two good schools, which were established by Midhat Pasha. Jews and Christian boys are admitted, but generally they keep away, as they might be uncomfortable among the little true believers. Young Turks, who get through the preparatory school well, may enter the higher school by agreeing to place their services at the disposal of the Government. The most proficient are sent to a college at Constantinople, and trained as officers for the army. Schools are attached to most of the mosques, where children are taught to read the Koran. But the Jewish and the Turkish schools are the only properly organized educational institutions in Baghdad. The Carmelite Fathers have a school for

Roman Catholic boys, but the reverend gentlemen have so much to do in otherwise ministering to their flock, that at times they have to close the school altogether. Latterly the Armenians have established a tolerable school of their own, and their first care was to take from the Jewish school a dozen little Armenian boys who were receiving instruction there.

A day or two after my arrival in Baghdad the new Governor-General, His Excellency Kadree Pasha, paid a visit to the British Political Agent, and was received in state. The contingent of the 21st Bombay Native Infantry, which does duty here as a guard of honour to the Resident, turned out and presented arms. His Excellency speaks Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and French fluently, and English very fairly. He takes in and regularly reads three papers published in the English language—the London *Times*, the *Times of India*, and one of the Constantinopolitan papers. He succeeds Akif Pasha, formerly Governor of Adrianople, who was removed from that post on account of the massacre, and who was removed from Baghdad because of certain grain riots which took place a few months since. Last year the enormous quantity of 50,000 tons of grain was exported from Baghdad to Bombay and England. The price of grain rose from 4*s.* 6*d.* the 139 lbs. to 9*s.*, and the lower classes saw starvation staring them in the face. They were also apprehensive of a failure of the forthcoming harvest. To make matters worse, the supplies from the slopes of the Persian ghauts ceased, owing to the impressment for military purposes of the

muleteers engaged in the trade. The people were much disturbed at the gloomy prospects, and clamoured for the prohibition of exports. They even threatened to forcibly stop them if the Government refused to act. Akif Pasha telegraphed to Constantinople for instructions, and he was told to forbid exportation if there was a prospect of famine. The Governor-General thereupon issued an order prohibiting the exportation of grain. But the populace, finding that nine buggalows were taking it down the river in spite of the order, seized and plundered the boats. A single regiment and a few artillery-men constituted the whole garrison of the town at the moment, and great fears were entertained for the safety of Baghdad. But the populace did not commence a general loot, as was apprehended. The town was regularly patrolled by the troops, and the general uneasiness of the people was allayed by the knowledge that the British Resident had ordered all her Majesty's subjects to obey strictly the prohibitory order. This was the state of affairs in December last.

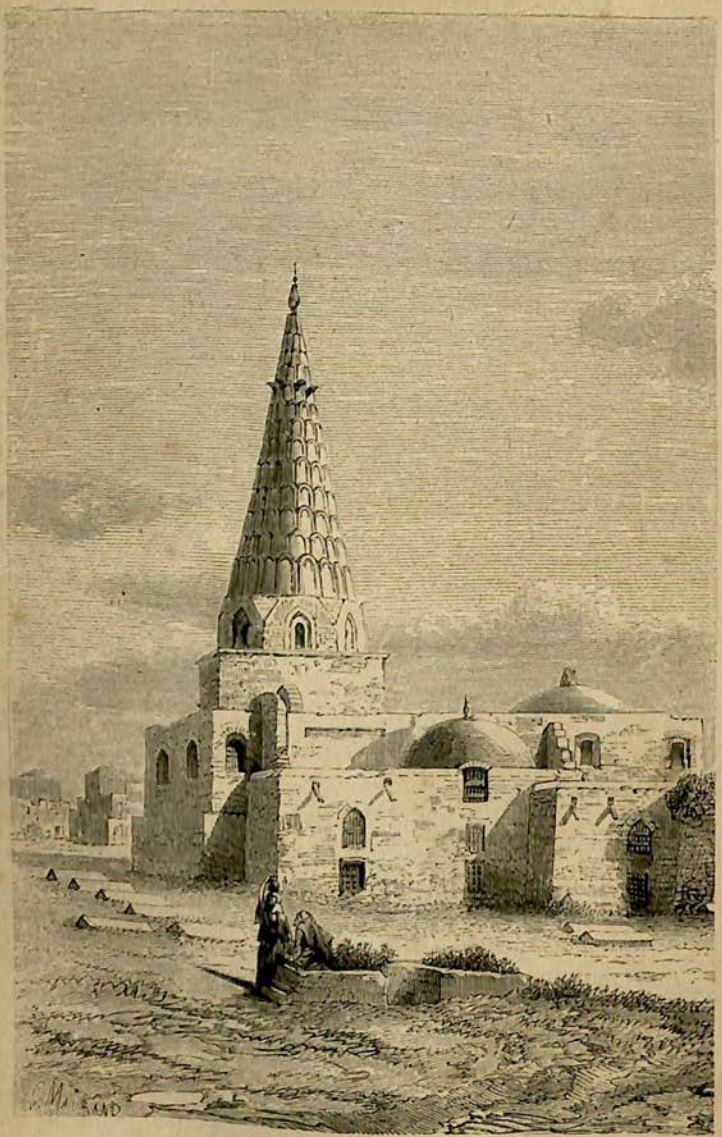
The exporters, finding that grain had fallen in the market, and calculating that the prohibition would be removed, bought up all the grain in the city and around, and filled their granaries with it. This exasperated the people beyond measure, for now starvation fairly set in. In February a European merchant, who said he had a permit from the Governor-General for the removal of his grain, proceeded to load the Blosse Lynch with a large quantity. Some grain was also sent down the river in buggalows. When the treason became known,

the populace rose in fury. A number of men started for Ctesephon, to intercept and destroy the buggalows. They only found vessels, however, which happened to contain no grain, and they let them go. In Baghdad, the custom-house off which the Blosse Lynch was lying was besieged.

The gates were fortunately shut in time, and the rioters could not gain ready admittance, but they declared that if the grain was not relanded from the Blosse Lynch, they would break the vessel up. There was no adequate force at hand to coerce them, so an order was given, with the approval of Colonel Nixon, to reland the grain. For a time a general plunder of the grain stores belonging to the export merchants seemed imminent, but the crisis was passed and there was no renewal of the rioting. The Government at Constantinople recalled Akif Pasha, and Kadree Pasha was sent to Baghdad to replace him. The danger of famine had passed in April. Supplies were beginning to find their way once more from the Persian valleys, and the great extent of land brought under cultivation of late years along the Tigris, was promising an abundant harvest. There is no longer any reason to anticipate famine under ordinary circumstances from the scale on which the wheat is sent out of the country.

Kadree Pasha is a man in the prime of life, having the appearance of a French *homme d'affaires*. He is very quiet and self-possessed, cool and observant, and with a certain look of decision which argues well for the success of his administration. The great fault laid to the charge

of the Governors-General since Redif Pasha's time is that they give orders which are good in themselves, but do not know how to compel their subordinates to carry them into effect. Redif Pasha had a way of hanging malefactors who were condemned to death, and doing other unpleasant things with promptitude and thoroughness, which gave Mesopotamia a new start in civilization. It is just possible that Kadree Pasha may be a man of the same stamp. Of Redif Pasha and of Midhat Pasha most people speak well. Midhat Pasha is especially remembered for his able and most beneficial administration. If he had been continued a few years longer in that government, he would have changed the face of the country. But even he is accused of want of firmness in dealing with delinquents, especially among his own subordinates. He was quite free from corruption himself, but he too easily despaired of putting a stop to it among the underlings. He admitted their failing, but tacitly confessed himself unable to apply a remedy. If Kadree Pasha be wise he will resolutely stop the many abuses which retard all progress and impoverish the Government. It is a common complaint that anything can be bought, and nothing can be got without being bought. This does not now apply to the administration of justice to the same extent as formerly, for the system has been greatly improved of late years. The right of appeal to the upper courts in itself naturally diminishes the corruption of the judges, but besides that, judgments are now no longer the work of one man; the judges have assessors, and they act as a check upon the consciences of



TOMB ADJACENT TO THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, BAGHDAD.

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the unjust. But in nearly every other department of government, corruption—if I am to believe all that I hear —prevails to a lamentable extent. There is a fine opportunity then for Kadree Pasha to acquire distinction if he is desirous of figuring in the chronicles of Baghdad as a great reformer. Once the magnificent province of which this city is the centre gets a government on the honesty and capacity of which all can implicitly rely, its growth in population will astonish the world.

Kadree Pasha very favourably impresses all who come in contact with him. He speaks with great good sense and appears desirous of acquiring information—an excellent trait in an oriental ruler.

CHAPTER X.

PILGRIMAGE TO KERBELLA.

An ex-king of Oude—A nobleman's house in Baghdad—An Oriental entertainment—Crossing the Tigris—River view of the city—The route to Kerbella—Escort—Difficulty in procuring a dragoman—An Arab salutation—What it often means—An Anglo-Indian victim—Plan of the tour beyond the Euphrates—First stage to Mahmoudieh—Fertility of the soil—Arab scouts—Tragedy at khan Haswa—Night at Mahmoudieh—Sequel to the Haswa tragedy—Arrival at Mosseyib—Abundance of grain—Want of means of intercommunication—Projected railway to Kerbella—Flat country around that city—The martyrdom of Hussein—The mosques—Large burial fees—The Persian pilgrims—Absence of bigotry—Visit from the Mujtahed—The governor of Kerbella—Indian charity—Provision for necessitous pilgrims.

On the 10th of April, before starting on a pilgrimage to the great Mussulman shrines west of the Euphrates, I lunched with Nawab Nadi Aga, a nobleman of position in Baghdad. The British Resident and His Highness the Nawab Ikhbal-ool-Dowlah, of the Royal Family of Oudh, were present. The Nawab Ikhbal-ool-Dowlah was, some forty years ago, King of Oudh for a few days, but his right to the succession being overruled by the British Government, he left Lucknow and India, and took up his abode at Baghdad. He visited Europe on

two or three occasions, and in London maintained in argument with the India Office, ineffectually of course, his right to the throne of Oudh. A pension of seven or eight thousand rupees a month, paid him by the British Government out of the revenues of Oudh, forms only a portion of his income, his private property being considerable. He is a man of strong good sense and active mind; if he had remained on the throne of Oudh the misgovernment which furnished Lord Dalhousie with an excuse for the annexation of that country would most probably never have existed. The Nawab is commonly spoken of as "the King of Oudh," and he enjoys great influence, which he turns to the best account. He is regarded as the head of the large community of Indian Mussulmans settled in Baghdad; and at Kerbella, and Nejef, by his tact and personal ascendancy keeps his countrymen out of much mischief into which they might very easily fall in a country where "moral order" is as yet almost unknown, and where Arabs, and Persians, and Turks, and Christians, are all in a state of antagonism. The services rendered by his Highness to the British Political Agent in controlling and guiding the eight or ten thousand "Hindis" settled in the vicinity of the holy places, and in keeping the pilgrims from India out of harm's way, have been cordially acknowledged by the Government of India from time to time, and recently an addition to his pension has been granted him as a mark of appreciation. Colonel Nixon, the present Political Agent at Baghdad, is an Anglo-Indian officer of great experience, who has a natural

gift, developed under Sir Henry Lawrence, for conciliating the affection of orientals.

The house of the Nawab Nadi Aga is, like all other houses in these parts, built round a courtyard, into which its windows and spacious verandahs look. Externally it shows nothing but blank walls, except on the side overlooking the river, where windows are placed for the sake of the view. In the courtyard when we entered were a number of hawks kept for sport. Some of the fiercest had hoods over their heads, but most of them were sufficiently tame to be allowed the free use of their bright inquiring eyes. These hawks are of the species called *chark* by the Persians, and will attack gazelles and antelopes, and either kill them or hold them in check until the dogs come up and secure them. The house was furnished in the European style. A large billiard table occupied one of the rooms. European chromo-lithographs hung on the walls; and above, touching the ceilings, were handsome mirrors, which at the ordinary elevation would have had a very fine effect, but being placed overhead at an awkward angle only reflected the tops of turbans. The ceilings of the rooms were handsomely decorated, and carpets covered the floors. The walls were simply whitewashed. This I notice is the rule generally in Baghdad. The general style of the house was less ambitious than what we are accustomed to see in the homes of the wealthy people in India, and especially in Bombay.

The table was laid in European fashion, with tablecloth, knives, forks, plates, and all the usual paraphernalia,

but the dishes were oriental. A sheep roasted whole was brought in on a large tray, and taken round for the guests to help themselves to portions which were partially detached. The sheep was stuffed with what looked and tasted like plum pudding, being composed principally of raisins and almonds and rice. The sheep removed, a large roast turkey was carried round. This was followed by a capon, to which succeeded a goose. Then came a gazelle, roasted and stuffed like the sheep. It was a milder venison, very succulent and full of flavour. We do not usually think of gazelles in connexion with the spit, and I confess to experiencing some compunctions of conscience as I helped to consume this tender flesh.

> "I never nursed a dear gazelle
> To glad me with its soft black eye,
> But when it came to know me well
> And love me, it was sure to die"—

by the hands of the cook, and be roasted whole! Was that what the gentle Lalla Rookh really meant? After the gazelle a lamb was brought in. Then came rice and kababs, and other dishes of unknown names and composition. Dishes followed dishes, and the table was laden with fruit and sweetmeats which had not yet been attacked. The sun was on the decline; I became anxious lest my departure for Kerbella should be delayed for another day. My host, however, very courteously urged me not to stand upon ceremony but to depart at once, and at four o'clock I rode back to the Residency to put on my travelling kit, and set out on my pilgrimage.

By five o'clock I was crossing the Tigris in a kuffa to the spot where the horses were standing. They had been ferried over some hours before, the bridge of boats being broken owing to a sudden rise of the water. A lovelier scene it would be difficult to find in any land than Baghdad presents from the river at eventide during the bright fresh spring, when garden and grove are in their newest green, and orange blossoms and hawthorns and acacias scent the air. The spring was fortunately for me unusually late; the heat which usually heralds the early summer had not yet set in, and the young foliage had not lost any of its freshness. The square grey houses, which look so uninviting when viewed from the narrow streets, are wonderfully picturesque when seen from the water, intermingled with date groves and mulberry-trees; and the domes and minarets of the mosques give variety and grace to the whole. The band of a Turkish regiment played lively airs at the Governor-General's residence on the river side, as the kuffa was gyrating across the swift stream; it would be impossible to imagine anything more bright and joyous than all that met the eye and ear on that beautiful April evening. When I reached the western bank I found my party ready to start.

The Arabs between Baghdad and Kerbella were not just then on their best behaviour, and those in the wilder country, southward, between Kerbella and Nejef, were credited with very evil behaviour, indeed. The country was not absolutely safe, and the British Resident frankly told me that if he possessed authority to prohibit my going on my present tour he would do so. But as he

could not do that he gave me a kawas from the Residency, whose uniform would confer upon me some of the British prestige, which, I am happy to say, is very considerable in the Pashalic of Baghdad. The Turkish authorities gave me two mounted zaptiehs—soldiers of the Redif on police duty—as an escort. They were armed with Enfield rifles and sabre bayonets. I provided myself with a dragoman—a Chaldean Christian—named Yusef, who speaks Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and English. I did not find it altogether easy to get a servant interpreter. The first man I engaged drew back when he found that I intended to cross to the Arabian side of the Euphrates and visit the great Shiah shrines. He said he would go to Hillah and the ruins of Babylon, but beyond the Fraat there were Arabs in the open country, and at the shrines Persians and other fanatics. It might be "very bad for him" to get into that country, and he asked me not to go beyond Hillah. I told him he could come as far as he pleased, and I would go the remainder of the way alone. He thereupon resigned his appointment. Fortunately, Yusef, a stout-built fellow, turned up, and said he would go to Kerbella and Nejef, and if he liked me and I liked him, he would go to Stamboul itself with me afterwards. I told him I would do my best to give him satisfaction, and bade him go at once and hire horses. Colonel Nixon very kindly lent me an Arab horse of very easy paces for my own use. The baggage was reduced to the smallest possible compass, so as to afford as little booty as might be to the Arab marauders, if we fell in with them. The owners of the hired horses, a couple of wiry muleteers,

accompanied the expedition on foot to feed the animals and see that they came to no harm.

We set out at five o'clock, passing around the suburb of Baghdad which stands on the western bank of the river.

We came in twenty minutes to a pretty large canal, on which kuffas floated. The Arabs to whom the round basket-boats belonged vociferously demanded that we should get our horses ferried across, but by moving a little to the southward we found a ford which we passed without difficulty, the water being only up to the horses' girths. In the course of an hour we were once again on the banks of the river, at a point where a very wide and deep canal connecting the Euphrates with the Tigris flows into the latter. A bridge of boats crosses the canal, and having paid a toll of two piastres or five pence per horse, we crossed over. A hundred yards further on lies a small hamlet, where, sinking into the clayey soil, stands a fine English-made traction engine, evidently doomed to rust itself out unused. Birds have a nest in the top of its funnel. At this hamlet half a dozen zaptiehs were taking their coffee and smoking the pipe of peace in a little enclosure. The sight had a demoralizing effect upon the corporal who commanded my escort. He suddenly discovered that it was out of the question to go further that night. The country was overflowed, and water and mud rendered the regular routes impracticable. We should stop for the night and go on at daybreak. This was of course absurd. It was necessary to reach Mahmoudieh—a khan or caravanserai

and village about half way to Mosseyib on the Euphrates—by ten o'clock, as we were to sleep there, and start for Mosseyib and Kerbella at daybreak. We told the mutinous corporal that there would be moonlight and a dry track to Mahmoudieh, and that we should go forward. He refused to stir. I informed him that if he chose to take the consequences he could remain behind, but that on the caravan should go. I cantered forward, and in a few minutes he followed, swearing audibly, to the great amusement of the younger zaptieh, who thoroughly enjoyed the rage of his discomfited corporal, and made many grimaces behind his back.

While a little ahead of the party, I came upon a young Arab sitting sideways upon a mule, and I said "Salaam" to him in passing. His response was a "Sa-la-am a-lei-koum," given with such impressive earnestness that the words sounded like a solemn benediction. I felt quite ashamed of the levity of the tone in which I had greeted this son of the desert, who evidently had a religious sense of the importance of mutual expressions of goodwill. Ten minutes later on the experienced Yusef came up, and we fell into conversation about Arabs and their ways. "There is no use talking," said Yusef, who spoke his doubtful English with an accent of conviction, "the Arabs are bad people. You will meet one of them who has left his long spear in a ditch, and he will say, 'sa-la-am' just as if he was your brother, but the minute your back turns he whips out his spear and is after you. He only want to find out whether other people behind. He will take everything,

even your shoes, and leave you nothing." Yusef had not heard my Arab give out his SALAAM ALEIKOUM, but he reproduced the sonorous prayerful tone like a phonograph. Whence I concluded that the tone in question was well-known, and appraised at its proper value in those regions. The dragoman's statement of the extent to which the Arab will go in pillaging the traveller was not an exaggeration. An Anglo-Indian functionary when crossing, very recently, the desert to Damascus, was stripped of everything, even to his stockings, within one day's march of his destination. His captors presented him with a newspaper in which to dress himself, and a handful of flour for food, and sent him on his way to Damascus.

I had better stop here for a moment to mention the plan of the tour upon which I had set out. Kerbella is some sixty miles south-west of Baghdad. It is necessary to cross the Euphrates at the town of Mosseyib, some forty miles on the way, and at that point one has the choice of two routes. There is a canal along which the traveller can go in a boat, and there is the usual caravan route, on which he can ride. I arranged to go by the canal, and send the horses southward to Kifl, to meet me there on my return from Kufa and Nejef, towns still further to the south-east, whither I was to proceed by boat across the marshes, and along the great Hindiah Canal.

The first stage of this journey takes us as far as the khan of Mahmoudieh. Once clear of the fields, and ditches, and canals in the neighbourhood of Baghdad,

we get into the great Mesopotamian plain, and canter along over the grass, where the grass still grows. But the sun is already drying up and withering the herbage, except in the immediate vicinity of the marshes, and the pulverized soil is drifting over the surface, giving to great tracts the appearance of a desert. There is not an acre of this ground which would not yield heavy crops if it were irrigated. The soil is as rich as any in the world, and it is so easily cultivated that the Arab women sometimes themselves drag the ploughs which turn it up for the seed. There are signs of increasing cultivation as we go along. Ditches bringing water from the marshes or from the canals have to be crossed, and large patches of corn are perpetually coming into view. However, the greater portion of the land is turned to account only for grazing purposes. When retracing this route afterwards in the daytime we pass great flocks of fat sheep which yield a coarse wool that is exported to Marseilles to be worked up into carpets in French looms.

The night was very cool and pleasant, and the bright moon right over head showed us the track. Our horses trample on their own shadows as they move. Suddenly there is a scare of Arabs. A zaptieh gallops forward to reconnoitre, holding his rifle to his shoulder. The supposed Arabs are the two horse owners who made a short cut to get in advance of the party. The zaptieh is much complimented on his quickness in discovering Arabs in ambush, and we move along merrily enough.

As we draw near Mahmoudieh the same zaptieh and

I push on ahead, cantering along the side of a new-made irrigation canal, which shows that the country in that neighbourhood is being brought into cultivation. Suddenly, upon entering the village of Mahmoudieh, we come upon two Arabs mounted on very fine horses, and with the usual long spears in their hands. They are evidently there to mark who passes in or out of the khan; when challenged by the zaptieh they make no answer, but leave the shadow of the wall in which they are lurking, and make believe to be riding along innocently enough. They are obviously on the prowl, and no doubt are acting as scouts for a larger party a few hundred yards off. Nothing further happens just then. But two hours later, outside the khan Haswa, the next halting-place beyond Mahmoudieh, nine Arabs with spears, and some of them with matchlocks, set upon six unfortunate Arabs driving as many donkeys carrying bags of rice for the Baghdad market. The robbers killed one of the honest men, badly wounded another, and made off with the donkeys and the rice. I would take an affidavit that the two prowlers whom we saw in the shadow of the wall outside the khan at Mahmoudieh formed part of the fatal nine.

The zaptieh knocked loud and long at the gate of the khan, and it was at length opened, and we rode in. The rest of the party soon came up. The khan is a large square brick building with towers at the corners and a big gateway in the centre. Inside at a height of four feet from the ground are arched niches about ten feet wide by eight deep. You get into any niche that is un-

occupied, and make it your room for the night. The horses are tied up to the front of your niche, and munch their barley while you eat your supper. It is a regular family party. The centre of the great quadrangle is occupied by a raised platform of brickwork, whereon, when all the niches are full, late comers can lie down for the night without being trodden on by the horses and mules, and asses, and camels, standing about. I had provided myself at Baghdad with an abba—the capacious cloak in which one can defy the sun by day and cold by night. The calico bag of which I have already spoken, when filled with the chopped straw on which the Arabs feed their horses, made a comfortable bed. Supper over, I "turned in" at once, spurs and all. It would be wrong to say that I slept soundly. The Arabs, donkey-drivers, camel-drivers, and muleteers kept up animated discussions during the night in tones of fury, which seemed to portend civil war at least. The horses neighed perpetually, the donkeys brayed, and the patient camels gave vent to plaintive sounds which forbade continuous sleep. The wind blew from the north-west and was very cold.

At four o'clock on the morning of the 11th of April we were all up and swallowing a hasty breakfast of hard-boiled eggs and harder bread. At a quarter to five we rode off on our way to Mosseyib. The route from Baghdad bifurcates a few miles beyond Mahmoudieh, the track which goes nearly due south leading to Hillah and Babylon, and that to the south-west to Mosseyib and Kerbella. We had been an hour on this latter route,

when we overtook a laden donkey, with its driver and an escort of one mounted Arab, spear in hand. The escort, a very powerful fellow with a splendid head that was a model for a painter, said "salaam" in subdued tones, very different from those I heard the night before.

The load on the ass attracted my attention. There were three cords tied round it; one eight or ten inches from the top, another about the middle, and the third a few inches from the bottom. It was clear that the bag did not contain rice. The Arab told the zaptiehs all about the affair. In the bag was his cousin, who had been killed at midnight by the nine Arabs at khan Haswa. He was taking the body a few miles farther on, to put it in a place of concealment for six months until he could get money to bury it properly in the holy ground at Kerbella. The other man who had been speared by the marauders was, he said, very badly hurt, and would very likely die too. It would be as God willed.

We had mounds and embankments constantly in view throughout the morning. Some of the ancient canals are still utilized for the purposes of irrigation, and if the others were cleared of the sand which chokes them up, they could be utilized too. Going at the "caravan pace" of about five miles an hour, we arrived at Mosseyib at ten o'clock in the forenoon. It is a small town built of sun-dried bricks or mud and chopped straw, and is prettily situated on both banks of the Euphrates, which is here a narrower and much more turbid stream than the Tigris.

The Euphrates is robbed of nearly half its volume by

the Hindiah Canal, and the great marshes on both sides of the river also take off immense quantities of its waters, for the banks have been sadly neglected and are now of little use in keeping the river to its bed. There are groves of date-trees above and below the town, and rice grows in every direction on the edge of the marshes. A hundredweight of grain, rice, wheat, or barley, can generally be got here at Hillah for a keraun, or tenpence. But as there is no road to Baghdad, and every bag has to be carried on the backs of donkeys, which take three days to do the journey to that town, the price is nearly trebled when it gets to market. A great deal of food is wasted which cannot be consumed on the spot and which it would not pay to carry to Baghdad. A common cart-road from Baghdad to Mosseyib or Hillah, would give a great impetus to the development of the pashalic, for grain and other produce could be taken across the plain in wheeled vehicles at a reasonable cost. The work would pay handsomely, no doubt; but it will not be constructed for many a year to come, by unaided Baghdad enterprise.

In Midhat Pasha's time a railway to Kerbella was on the point of being constructed. The ground was surveyed and estimates drawn up: a Belgian firm engaged to supply the iron for the permanent way, and to erect a bridge over the Euphrates a little to the north of Mosseyib. The terms were fixed, and the works were about to be begun, when the Austro-Prussian war broke out, and the contractor notified that the undertaking must, so far as he was concerned, be postponed for a time.

The opportunity passed, and Midhat Pasha being recalled nothing has been done in the matter from that day to this. There is no reasonable doubt but the railway would have been highly remunerative. The pilgrims from Baghdad to Kerbella number some 200,000 per annum; a pound a piece from them for return tickets would furnish a respectable income, irrespective of that from other sources. The transport of dead Persians now carried on the backs of mules to their repose in the sacred soil beneath the shadow of the tomb of Hussein, would yield considerable returns to a railway company. There are no engineering difficulties to surmount; the plain from the western suburbs of Baghdad to Mosseyib is as level as a bowling-green, and from the Euphrates to Kerbella—a distance of twenty miles—it is the same. Mosseyib has now a population of four or five thousand inhabitants, and if it were in railway communication with Baghdad, it would speedily become a place of considerable importance, for it is the natural entrepôt for such of the produce of the Euphrates valley as could find a market at Baghdad.

Kerbella is a town of sixty thousand inhabitants, and is situated in the midst of a fertile and well-cultivated district; there is a brisk trade even now carried on there, which would be indefinitely developed by a railway bringing it within three hours of the great city on the banks of the Tigris.

At twelve o'clock we crossed the Euphrates by a rickety pontoon bridge, and embarked on the canal leading to Kerbella in a long shallow boat made of reeds coated

with bitumen. For the first two or three hours the canal passed between tracts of pasture-land, on which cattle and sheep were grazing. Then for three hours until we reached Kerbella we passed through endless groves of date, mulberry, fig, pomegranate, and orange trees. The air was fragrant with flower and blossom.

A few miles from Kerbella we passed a spot where houses reduced to ruin by artillery fire, and trees felled for the passage of troops, told of civil war some three months before. The Kerbellese, finding that the government had scarcely any troops at its disposal, refused to pay taxes, or to submit to the conscription. The roads were blocked up, and travellers and traders coming from without were fired at from the date-trees. In the city itself anarchy prevailed. Different Arab factions fought out old grudges in the streets, and Persian and Hindu settlers had a very unquiet time.

This state of things was put an end to by the action of an expeditionary force—four hundred men with two or three guns—which fought its way through the date-groves to the city, killing two or three hundred Arabs and itself losing fifteen or twenty men. Order now reigns at Kerbella, and the roads—if I may be excused for calling them roads—are open to pilgrims and to trade.

We arrived at Kerbella at six o'clock. The town is surrounded by a high brick wall which is sadly in need of thorough repair if it is to be relied on as a defence against even the Arabs of the desert. The streets are crowded and far from clean. The bazaars are well stocked and busy. Persians and Arabs form the bulk of the jostling

crowd. There are also many Hindu Moslems, and a few Jews; the only Turks are those connected directly or indirectly with the administration.

Kerbella owes its sanctity and its importance to the great historic event of the martyrdom of Hussein, son of Ali and of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. Ali having been assassinated when at prayer in the Mosque at Kuffa, Hussein fled to Mecca. The people of Kuffa sent him an invitation signed, it is said, by a hundred thousand Moslems, to come to their city and assume the Caliphate, promising to sustain his rights by force of arms. Contrary to the advice of his wisest friends he set out for Kuffa at the head of a small body of horse, and accompanied by his sister, his wives, and his children. When he approached Kerbella he found that the Governor of Kuffa had suppressed a movement set on foot by his friends, and that the country southward was occupied by the forces of his rival Yezid. As he was riding at the head of his little army, he fell asleep and saw in a dream a horseman, who said, "Men travel by night, and the Destinies travel by night towards them." "This," said Hussein, "I know to be a message of our deaths;" but he continued his march. A general deputed by the Governor of Kuffa, approaching with four thousand men, demanded, "Why he was marching in that direction?" Hussein answered, "That he came by the invitation of the people at Kuffa, but since they no longer desired to have him to rule over them, he would return whence he came." When this was communicated to the implacable governor, he

refused assent to the proposal, and directed his general, Amer, to "get between him and the water." Hussein was then at Kerbella, and Amer posted his men between him and the Euphrates, so as to cut him off from the river. When Hussein found this he exclaimed, "Kerb and Bala—trouble and affliction." He asked for a conference with Amer, and declared himself ready to adopt either of three conditions: To go with a safe-conduct to Yezid at Damascus; to return to Arabia; or to consent to be placed in some garrison to fight against the Turks. The Governor of Kuffa peremptorily insisted that Hussein and his party should surrender on pain of being put to the sword. This was communicated to Hussein, who asked Amer to give him to the next morning to consider—a request which was granted.

While leaning on his sword, Hussein once again fell asleep, and the Prophet appeared to him, and said, "Thou shalt rest with us." His sister awoke him and he told her what he had seen and heard in his dream, whereupon she struck her face, exclaiming, "Woe to us!" He said to her, "Sister, you have no reason to complain. God have mercy upon you! Hold your peace!" In the night she came to him again, and cried, "Alas! for the desolation of my family. I would that I had died yesterday, and not lived till to-day. My mother Fatima is dead, and my father Ali, and my brother Hassan. Alas! for the destruction that has passed, and the bitter days that remain behind!" Hussein reproved her; "Sister, do not let the devil take away your tranquillity of mind!" She beat her face, tore open her bosom,

and fell in a swoon. Hussein revived her, and reminded her that the people of the earth must all die, and everything perish but the presence of God. "My father," he said, "was better than I, my mother was better than I, my brother was better than I; and I, and they, and every Mussulman must die as the Apostle of God himself has died." He commanded her not to give way to grief after his death, and led her to her tent. He then gave his friends permission to seek their own safety in flight, as the enemy desired his life alone, but they replied: "God forbid that we should ever see the time when we should survive you!"

The destined martyr then calmly made arrangements for the coming battle, the result of which could not be doubtful, for his infantry numbered no more than forty, and his cavalry thirty-two. He protected his flanks and rear with the tents and ropes, and formed a trench which he filled with combustibles, to be set on fire when the enemy pressed home. He then washed and anointed himself, using perfumes of the most valuable kind. His chief men did the same, and when asked why they took this particular care of their persons, they said, "Alas! there is nothing between us and the black-eyed girls but the time that we are waiting for the enemy to come down upon us and kill us." Hussein then got on horseback with the Koran in his hand, and said, "My protector is God, who sent down the Book, and He will be the protector of the righteous." His sister and daughters, hearing this, wept aloud. Hussein, much distressed, cried, "God reward the son of

Abbas!"—who had strongly counselled him to leave his family behind in safety at Mecca. At this juncture thirty of the enemy's horse came over to his side, resolved to die with him. Harro, the leader of this little band, cried out to his late companions, "Woe to you! you invited Hussein, and when he came you deceived him. This was not enough, but you came forth to fight against him, and have even cut him off from the Euphrates, and will not allow him, and his wives, and children, to drink the water which Jews, and Christians, and Sabians drink, and in which swine and dogs disport themselves." The battle began with a shower of arrows, and was continued by a series of single combats in which the followers of Hussein were invariably successful, fighting as they did without the least fear of death. One of Amer's men came up to Hussein, and said, "Hussein, you are close to hell," Hussein answered, "No, but alas for thee! I go to a merciful Lord full of forgiveness, easy to be obeyed, but you are more worthy of hell!" This impious reviler was soon punished, for his horse running away with him, he fell off, and his left foot being caught in the stirrup, one of Hussein's party struck off his right leg, and his brains were dashed out against the stones as he was dragged along. One of Yezid's officers called for fire to burn Hussein's tent and all in it. The women shrieked, and ran out. "How," cried Hussein, "thou wouldst burn my family? God burn thee in hell fire!" At noon Hussein asked for a cessation of hostilities, so that he might say the mid-day prayer. "It will not be heard," cried one of

the enemy. "Alas for you!" retorted a devoted follower of Hussein; "shall your prayers be heard, and not the prayers of the Apostle's family, upon whom be peace?" Hussein repeated the noon-tide prayer, and added to it the Prayer of Fear, used in cases of direst extremity, and said, "Let not the dews of heaven distil upon them, and withhold thou from them the blessings of the earth, for they first invited me and then deceived me."

His little force was soon after cut to pieces; his eldest son Ali was killed before his eyes, but the archers were loth to slay himself. He was, however, at length wounded in the head. Quite exhausted, he sat down, and took upon his knee his little son Abdallah, who was almost instantly shot through with an arrow and killed. He threw a handful of the child's blood towards heaven, and cried, "O Lord, if Thou now withholdest help from heaven, give it to those that are better, and take vengeance upon the wicked." Soon after this he was shot in the mouth while quenching his thirst at a well. Then he lifted up his hands again and prayed most earnestly. He was soon surrounded. A little nephew running up to embrace him had his hand severed with a sword, but Hussein consoled him, saying, "Thy reward, child, is with God; thou shalt go to thy pious forefathers." Then he threw himself with fury into the midst of his enemies, and "they fled from his onslaught, as deer before a lion." His sister approached Amer and asked him if he could stand by and see Hussein killed. Amer was moved to tears and turned away from her, for his heart and the hearts of his soldiers were softened, and the latter would have

spared Hussein; but a bitter enemy, named Shamer, with curses and reproaches urged them to kill him. Then the javelins flew thick and fast at Hussein, and he received three and thirty wounds, and four and thirty contusions; a spear pierced his heart, and his head was struck off. The furious victors trampled his body into the ground with their horses' feet. His head was sent to Yezid, and it was observed that a light streamed upwards from it to heaven, and white doves hovered around. His body was buried at Kerbella.

The tragic circumstances of this martyrdom of a saint and hero made a profound impression upon the Oriental imagination. For twelve hundred years the burial-place at Kerbella has been regarded by all Persia, and the Shiahs throughout the remainder of the fold of Islam with passionate love and reverence. The tenth day of the Mohurrum, which was that of his martyrdom, is marked by solemn ceremonies, the devout beating their breasts until the blood flows, and shedding torrents of tears in an agony of grief.[1]

A considerable town sprung up around the tomb where his headless body reposed, and it enjoyed such a reputation for holiness that it became an inviolable sanctuary in which all the most desperate criminals of Mohammedan Asia sought a secure refuge. In the last century Nadir Shah gilded the great dome of the mosque of Hussein. Some forty years ago the Turks reduced the town to obedience, the refugees and the citizens opposing a stout resistance. When they found

[1] See Appendix C.

the defence of the walls unavailing they retired to the Mosque, believing that the Turks would respect the sacred character of the building and leave them unmolested. But they were mistaken; the Pasha brought up his cannon and fired into the mosque, causing great damage to the structure, and compelling the unconditional surrender of those who had sought refuge in it. Kerbella is no longer a refugium peccatorum, but it continues to be a city of great holiness, scarcely second in the estimation of all true Shiahs to Mecca itself.

I was provided with letters of introduction from Colonel Nixon, the Nawab Ikhbal-ool-Dowla, Dr. Colvill, and others, to the chief Shiah personages of Kerbella, and was at once invited to put up at the house of the first personage to whom I presented my credentials. I was provided with a splendid supper *à la mode de Kerbella.* I found that chairs and tables were quite unknown in this centre of Shiah orthodoxy. The supper was served on the carpet in a tray; the hands supplied the place of knife and fork. Still all was hospitable and kind, and I felt myself at home. The next morning, I viewed the town and the surrounding country, with its forest of date-trees, from the terrace of one of the highest houses in Kerbella. The panorama spread out around was wonderfully varied and picturesque. The Mosque of Hussein, the largest and noblest of the five in Kerbella, rises in the centre of the town. Its great gilded dome shines resplendent in the sun, and is flanked by graceful minarets. The Mosque of Abbas has also a

fine dome and tall minarets, covered with tiles arranged in arabesque. The different elevations of the houses produce a variety of surface which is wanting in Baghdad, as seen from above. Around the city extend the lofty walls, with bastions at intervals—formidable enough in appearance at a distance. The whole is embedded in a sea of verdure, beyond which the eye can detect only here and there glimpses of the distant desert.

The hearts of all Shiahs turn to this city, sanctified by the memory of the martyred Hussein, who fell a victim to misbelieving enemies. To be buried in Kerbella is a passport to Paradise, and from Persia, from India, from far and near, come the bodies of the Faithful to be interred in the holy ground. The revenue derived from the burial-fees is something enormous. The moullas charge heavily, especially in the case of a rich man or a prince. But surely a grave which is but the vestibule of Paradise is worth a good deal of money to any one, and to a rich man it ought to be priceless. The British India Steam Navigation Company add something to their dividends by bringing bodies from Bombay and intervening ports to Bussorah on their way to Kerbella. I have heard of 60*l.* being charged for the passage of a carpet-bagful of dry bones, which were all that remained of a disinterred Shiah. Most of the bodies brought to Kerbella have been buried before. If a man dies before his representative has money or leisure to take his body to the sacred soil, no one regards it as improper that it should be deposited in any convenient place underground until funds come in.

In six months or a year, or even in two or three or five years, all his bones will be reverently dug up, put into a box or a bag, and carried on a mule, a camel, or a donkey, across even half a continent, without any ceremony or parade of grief, and finally deposited, after a good deal of bargaining, in ground made sacred by the blood of Hussein. The International Sanitary Commission and the Turkish authorities contrived a few years ago so to harass the Persian Pilgrims with quarantine regulations and pecuniary exactions, that the Shah took advantage of the general indignation amongst his subjects to prohibit the pilgrimage to the holy places within the Ottoman dominions. The stream was turned to Meshed, a holy shrine in Persia itself, and for seven or eight years past the Persians have not come by hundred thousands as they did before. As most of the pilgrims used to bring goods to sell at Baghdad or at Kerbella, and take back to their native land English cotton goods, or other merchandise purchased in the bazaars, the loss to trade has been very great. Russia has availed herself of the opportunity to push her goods well into Persia by the Caspian route, and while the Custom-house at Baghdad has lost heavily, the Russians have gained. Every one of the 100,000 or 120,000 pilgrims who annually came from Persia used of course to spend money along the route, which enriched the bazaars of the Turkish towns. It was the practice for those intending to make the journey to save up for six months or a year, or even two years, to get money enough to spend on the way. The poorest fakeer could

not venture to set out without at least a hundred or a couple of hundred kerauns in his possession, and people of the better sort would spend four or five thousand kerauns, or even ten thousand, bringing their families with them and travelling in state. But the vexations of the quarantine, the illegal exactions, and the insecurity of the roads arising from the natural anxiety of Sunni Arabs to pillage Shiah Kaffres and thus enrich themselves and do a service to religion by one and the same act, nearly brought on a war between Persia and Turkey, and put almost a complete stop to the stream of pilgrims. Turkey has, however, seen the inconvenience of all this, and negotiations have been for some time in progress with a view to an arrangement. The conditions are not yet quite agreed upon, but the pilgrims are beginning to come along the old routes once more. I passed several caravans of Persians on the route from Baghdad to Mooseyib, most of them having a coffin tied across the back of a mule. In the bazaars at Kerbella Persian headdresses meet the eye at every turn; they seem almost as numerous as the Arab kaftiehs.

So far as I could observe, the accounts which one hears at Baghdad of the bigotry of the moullahs and populace of Kerbella are gross exaggerations. The morning after my arrival I was honoured by a visit from Abdool Kassim, the Mujtahed, or chief priest of the mosque of Shah Hussein, the great shrine of Kerbella. He was accompanied by a large number of his moullahs, and we had a long conversation upon the

political situation at Constantinople and other matters. I was upbraided for not coming to Abdool Kassim's house to put up, and when I stated I could not stay for a second day in Kerbella, I was seriously remonstrated with for not prolonging my visit. Before leaving the Mujtahed said he would send me a horse to ride to the edge of the marsh, some three miles distant, where I was to take boat for the Hindiah Canal and Nejef.

Shortly after the departure of my kind visitors, I was sent five large boxes of sweetmeats as a mark of attention.

In the afternoon I paid a visit to the Governor of Kerbella and handed him a letter from the Pasha of Baghdad. He is a Constantinopolitan of Circassian descent, and dresses in the European style, having nothing of the oriental in manner or appearance. He speaks, however, neither French nor English, and our conversation was carried on through the interpreter. He asked with natural interest for details of the political entanglement at Constantinople, and when informed that it appeared probable that England would go to war, if necessary, single-handed rather than permit the Treaty of San Stefano to stand, he said that if England had acted with firmness three months earlier, she might have done what she pleased with the Russians, but now he thought it was almost too late, and the task would be very difficult. This I find to be a very general opinion among the Turks: their doubts are greater than their hopes, though the latter, it is easy to see, are by no means extinct. The commandant of the garrison, a fine soldier-

like man over six feet in height, followed the conversation with attention, but, with a diplomatic reserve which I observe characterizes nearly every Turk I meet, carefully avoided committing himself to any expresssion of opinion.

After coffee and cigarettes had been handed round, I told the mutaseriff that I had sent back the two zaptiehs whom I had brought with me from Baghdad, and asked him for two others to accompany me to Nejef and afterwards to Hillah. He said, "You ask for two, I shall have much pleasure in giving you four!" The route, he added was safe, but it was better to have an escort of four: he wished to give them to me, as I was a friend to whom he should be glad to do honour. I accepted the enlarged escort, though I feared that it would make my caravan somewhat unwieldy, requiring perhaps two boats for water-carriage instead of one. But the time was coming when I was to have my escort again doubled. The safer the routes were pronounced to be, the larger my escort of zaptiehs became.

There is a fine market-place, from which a new street some forty feet wide leads to the Serai or Governor's house and secretariat. A street so wide is quite a curiosity in Turkish Arabia, and deserves to be specially mentioned. Another matter deserves also to be chronicled here. In the Governor's room there were not only several chairs, but a table. It was a small iron camp-table, it is true, but still a table. So far as I could learn it was the only article of furniture of the kind in Kerbella.

Three Greeks constitute, I believe, the European element

in the town. One of these, Mr. Dimitri, called upon me and mentioned, *inter alia*, that an Armenian doctor, who was almost a Frenchman in education and habits, wished to see me, but was unable to come just then, owing to some business engagements. In riding across the desert from Mahmoudieh a keen wind from the north, composed apparently of two parts of fine sand and one of pure saltpetre, had got at my right eye, the Indian sun topee which I wore giving no protection from such an enemy. The consequence was an acute and very painful inflammation, which troubled me considerably. A young Turkish apothecary attached to the regiment quartered at Kerbella hearing of this from Mr. Dimitri, very obligingly came, unasked, and applied a cooling lotion to the suffering eye, for which I was not a little grateful. It would have been ridiculous to return to Baghdad, after so short an absence, blind of my right eye, just as if I were a calendar and the son of a prince. This intelligent young Turk appeared well educated: he understood French, though he could not speak it well, and knew the names of the different medicines in English.

I was also visited during the day by Abdool Kareem, a nephew of Sayud Edroos, C.S.I., of Surat. He is the Vakeel at Kerbella, of Seyud Mahadi Hussein of Lucknow, who lives alternately at Baghdad and Kerbella. A devout nobleman of Lucknow a couple of generations back bequeathed a sum of Rs. 8000 a month in Government of India paper for the use of pilgrims to Kerbella and Nejef. His widow afterwards bequeathed an additional sum of Rs. 1500 a month for

the same pious purpose. The money is divided into three portions of about Rs. 3000 each, two of which are given amongst Persian and Arab pilgrims at Kerbella and Nejef, by Mujtahed Abdool Kassim at the former place, and Mujtahed Sayud Ali Bahr-oo-ooloom at Nejef. The third portion is distributed to necessitous Indian pilgrims by Seyud Mahadi Hussein. Many pilgrims from India find themselves out of funds at the end of the tour of the shrines, and they would have to be sent back by the Resident at Baghdad as necessitous British subjects but for this fund. The money is paid over to the three distributors monthly by Colonel Nixon, and this operation has a very natural tendency to promote feelings of goodwill between the Resident and the heads of the Shiah community. The influence thus acquired is not perverted to political uses, but it has a very beneficial influence in many indirect ways, and secures for pilgrims from India a degree of consideration which might otherwise not be accorded to them.

CHAPTER XI.

NEJEF AND KIFL.

Across the Marshes—The Hindiah canal—Not a modern work—Attempt to divert its course by natives of India—Waywardness of the Euphrates—Expected to make a new channel to the sea—Expenditure on repairing its banks—The tomb of Ezekiel—Arrival at Kufa—Seizing donkeys—View of Nejef—Dangers of the way—Houses of Refuge—Origin of the town—Population of the place—The Sea of Learning—Dinner with the Mujtahed—Return to Kufa—Arabs on the way—A bloodless skirmish—The town of Kifl—Visit to Ezekiel's tomb—View of the surrounding country—Jewish pilgrimages to the shrine.

I LEFT Kerbella at half-past three in the afternoon, riding a splendid Arab mare, which the Mujtahed, Abdool Kassim, sent me according to his promise. The rest of the party rode on donkeys hired in the market-place. To the edge of the marsh, where we were to take a boat, there is a hard road, the only one I had hitherto seen. An hour's ride brought us to the margin of what was then a vast lake, extending in every direction as far as the eye could reach. A few months later on, when the waters of the Euphrates, which overflowed the country, had evaporated, this lake was of course transformed into a fever-breeding marsh.

Abdool Kareem kindly undertook to accompany me during the remainder of my pilgrimage, and he nego-

tiated the hiring of a pretty large ship from the Arabs. The vessel was thirty-five feet long, some six feet in the beam, and had a mast of portentous length, with a square sail in proportion. Compared to the usual Arab skiffs, about four feet six long, made of reeds and covered with bitumen, our vessel was a leviathan of the deep. She carried the whole party, soldiers and all, without crowding. The surface of the water for many a mile was covered with little white flowerets resembling daisies, which had their roots three or four feet down in the muddy bottom. Grass and reeds also showed above the surface, and in some places retarded the progress of the boat. A couple of Arabs shoved the boat along with stout bamboos, on the tops of which were balls of bitumen, whereon they rested their broad chests when pushing. The wind was from the south, so the sail was useless, as we were going nearly due south. Little islands rose amidst the waste of shallow water, and on each of them was perched a small encampment of Arabs.

As the waters recede the islanders feed their cattle on the coarse herbage of the marsh. When the Euphrates pours out a flood sufficient to inundate the islands, the little skiffs save the population from drowning. A great deal of fish is caught by the Arabs in these waters: we bought some of large size for a few piastres. During the night the south wind became so strong that the boat had to stop for a couple of hours. At sunrise we were still some miles from the Hindiah Canal. Birs Nimroud, the supposed Tower of Babel, was conspicuous

above the level of the horizon to the east, though at a great distance.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 12th April, after a voyage across the lake of twelve hours, exclusive of stoppages, we entered the Hindiah Canal. This is a broad and rapid stream, which carries off nearly half the waters of the Euphrates, and either pours them over the face of the country, forming great marshes, or leads them into the Sea of Nejef. It is popularly supposed that the Hindiah Canal was made half a century ago by Afzul Khan and some other wealthy natives of Lucknow. The name "Hindiah," I was told when passing into the stream, commemorated the fact that Afzul Khan was a native of India. But the late Mr. George Smith found a cuneiform inscription which showed that this stream existed thousands of years ago, and that on its banks dwelt a tribe of Arabs called the "Hindowan," who paid tribute to the king of Assyria. It is very doubtful whether the "canal" is a canal at all. It seems to be a river. The works which Afzul Khan, and the other Hindis undertook in order to divert the course of the canal ended in failure.

At Kufa, near the north-east angle of the Sea of Nejef, Hindiah makes a détour to the eastward, and only enters that sea some thirty miles to the south. Afzul Khan and his pious compatriots saw that it would be a great thing for the holy town of Nejef, which is situated on the north of the sea of that name, four miles west of Kufa, if the stream were carried to the shrine by a canal, and its waters discharged into the sea at that

point. Great cuttings were made through the limestone which forms the northern cliffs of the Sea of Nejef, but the attempt to divert the waters of the Hindiah to the town of Nejef failed, although large sums of money were expended upon it. The stream is very swift, flowing south-west, and is about eight or nine feet deep when the Euphrates is at its full.

The waywardness of the Euphrates is a source of much anxiety. For a distance of 120 miles its banks are in a very unsafe condition, and every year they give way at different points. The river seems to be inclined to quit its present bed from Mosseyib southward, and flow in full volume through the Hindiah canal into the Sea of Nejef, and thence through the southern outlet of that sea, also called the Hindiah, either regaining its old bed some sixty miles still farther to the south, or else cutting a new channel for itself to the Persian Gulf westward of the Shat-el-Arab. The Euphrates is no longer content with its banks, it quits them or breaks them down almost every season. This year its waters found their way in considerable volumes into the Tigris close to Baghdad. Yet in 1877 a sum of 12,000*l.* was spent—or said to be spent—upon repairing a breach in the banks through which it deluged the country this spring. Aa'ree Pasha ordered an inquiry into the particulars of the expenditure of the 12,000*l.* last year. His Excellency was of course informed at the outset that the overflowing of rivers was in the hands of God, and no one was responsible for such visitations. "Yes," responded the Pasha, "I know that the over-

flowing of the Euphrates is in the hands of God, and I am not going to inquire into that. But the spending of 12,000*l.* of Government money is a matter into which I may lawfully inquire."

The south wind continuing after our boat had entered the Hindiah canal, it was towed by an active Arab, who walked or ran along the brink over the grass, on which flocks and herds grazed. At ten o'clock we passed Kifl, where the prophet Ezekiel lies buried. His tomb is visited by thousands of Jews and Mohammedans; in some years 20,000 pilgrims encamp on the plain around the little town. The synagogue with its blue dome is a conspicuous object for many a league around. At half-past four o'clock we reached Kufa, the site of a city once the greatest in all the land, but now little more than a village in the midst of ruins. We proceeded to secure donkeys to take us to Nejef, lying an hour's journey to the westward. There were scores of donkeys ready saddled for pilgrims at the landing-place, but the donkey drivers when they saw the Frank endeavoured to make off with the animals, so that they might be able to exact fancy prices from the infidel. The soldiers from Kerbella were, however, too quick for them. They drew their swords and seized half-a-dozen donkeys, notwithstanding the entreaties and resistance of the drivers. All the village turned out to see the row, but the recalcitrant drivers got little sympathy, though they protested that the soldiers wanted to take their donkeys for nothing. This they knew well was not the case, for the dragoman and the kawas told them that I would pay for every

donkey required. It was necessary to thrash one or two of the more obstreperous drivers to make them hear reason. After half-an-hour's delay, the party proceeded on its way to Nejef. A quarter of an hour from Kufa we came upon the high embankments of a great canal now dry. Crossing this, we had a view of Nejef, some three miles distant, built on a rising ground, the gilded dome of Meshed Ali flashing back the rays of the declining sun.

Nejef is on the borders of the Arabian Desert, and pilgrims have to encounter many dangers to reach the shrine. The piety of the richer Shiahs has done something to mitigate these dangers, at all events in the immediate vicinity of the town itself. Small houses of refuge with low narrow doors which would allow a pilgrim and his ass to enter, but would keep out any mounted Arab who wished to spear him, are dotted over the plain. Wells have also been dug for the refreshment of weary pilgrims. It is the tradition that the Caliph Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, when dying at Kufa, directed that his body should be placed on a camel, and that wherever the animal rested his remains should be interred. The camel went to the cliff on the northern shore of the sea, and there lay down. Ali was buried on the spot, and the town of Nejef sprang up around his tomb. Meshed Ali has been for twelve centuries one of the greatest shrines of the Moslems, and it is visited yearly by the devout in scores of thousands.

The town is surrounded by a deep and broad ditch

and a lofty wall, with bastions in very good condition, the brick-work for the most part looking as if recently constructed. Upon entering the great gateway, we found ourselves in a spacious market-place, which was clean and well swept. The streets and bazaars were not quite so narrow or so crooked as those of Kerbella and the other towns I had recently seen, and they were infinitely cleaner and more wholesome. The place has about 12,000 inhabitants. I sent the kawas to the Mujtahed, Syud Bahr-oo-Ooloom, (the "Sea of Learning,") the chief of the Shiah community, with letters which Colonel Nixon and others had kindly given me for him. The messenger came back with a request that I should go to his house, and that as soon as he returned from prayers at the mosque he would see me there. We proceeded to his house, where tea was served in the Persian style in pretty little glass vases.

I then made a rapid perambulation of the town. The gates were shut as night was coming on, so I could not go outside to get a look at the Sea of Nejef from the shore. But I got on the walls, and from one of the highest bastions had a splendid view of this secluded sea. Its waters are salt, though the waters of the Euphrates flow freely into it. Cliffs a couple of hundred feet high surround it apparently on all sides, for the shore line is visible to a great distance far away to the south. It is about sixty miles long from north to south, and from twenty to thirty miles in breadth. About twenty-five miles from Nejef it narrows considerably, but soon

spreads out again as broad as before. It is into the lower basin, about twenty miles farther to the south, that the Hindiah Canal flows. The efforts of Afzul Khan were directed, as I have said, to the diversion of the canal, so as to make it fall into the northern basin of the sea at Nejef. The Hindiah flows out of the sea at its southern extremity.

Nejef is built on an elevated ridge of limestone, about 150 feet above the level of the sea. The southern breeze comes to it from the Nejd and over the sea, and is, at all events in the month of April, delightfully cool and exhilarating. The air here is quite different from that of Kerbella and the great tracts of inundated land on both sides of the Euphrates. The people of the place to whom I spoke themselves mentioned this fact, and said that Nejef was very healthy.

When I returned to the Mujtahed's house I was received by his brother, and regaled with cigarettes until the "Sea of Learning" himself arrived. The Mujtahed is a venerable-looking old man with large well-cut features, and a snowy beard resting on his ample chest. Though old, he is by no means feeble, either physically or mentally, and his keen dark eyes show great intelligence. He welcomed me cordially to Nejef, and asked me what I thought of the town and sea. He pressed me to stop with him two or three days, so that he might be able to show me all that was to be seen. He asked about Colonel Nixon, Dr. Colvill, his Highness Ikhball-oo-Dowlah and others in Baghdad, and then put a series of questions to me about the state of

things at Stamboul. He said he heard that the Sultan had invited the Czar's son to come into Constantinople, and kept him there for two days, and had him to dinner. Was that true or not? I said that after peace was signed, the Grand Duke was asked to dinner by the Sultan as a mere piece of politeness. It was necessary in politics to be civil even to very questionable people. This view of the case appeared to satisfy the disturbed conscience of the Mujtahed. The amount of the Russian indemnity completely staggered all who heard it; they seemed to be unaware of the amount until I mentioned it to them. They thought I had made a mistake, and that instead of "lira Anglesia" the 220,000,000 must refer to beshlecks or shillings. However, when they heard that all but 48,000,000*l.* had been "taken out" in territory, the possibility of levying so preposterous an amount of black mail was admitted.

At length dinner was served, and the pious and venerable head of the Shiahs at Nejef did me the honour of putting his hand into the same dish, or rather dishes, for there were a couple of dozen at least. The table was constructed by placing a couple of wooden foot-stools one upon the other, and then placing on the top a large metal tray about four feet in diameter. The dishes were placed on this tray as close as they could be packed, some partly resting on the edges of the others. For me there was a plate and even a knife and fork, but no one else required such superfluities. A basin and a copper water-jug were taken round by an attendant, and everybody washed his right hand; that preliminary being

accomplished, everybody fell to. Most of the dishes were composed of rice and fowl, raisins being mixed up with the rice in some dishes, and some yellow substance in others. The guests dislocated the fowls dexterously with the right hand, which alone it was good manners to employ for the purpose, and helped one another to wing or breast in token of good-fellowship. The reverend host felt for a particularly tender pullet, and having squeezed it, and separated its joints, placed it on my plate. After every few mouthfuls we sipped from wooden spoons a pleasant acid drink of which lemon juice was one of the constituents. A great variety of sweetmeats and preserves succeeded the more solid dishes.

Dinner over, pipes and cigarettes and coffee were brought in, and we had a chat. The town of Nejef, I was told, had been very anarchical indeed a few months before. The townspeople refused to submit to the conscription, or to pay taxes. A body of Turkish troops which had pacified Kerbella arrived, and order was re-established without difficulty. Thirty arrests were made, and the disturbers of public order were sent off to Kerbella, where they were put in prison. The Mujtahed and the other great men present express their entire approval of the action of the Turks in restoring order. Since the arrest of the ringleaders of the disturbances, Nejef, they tell me, has been quite tranquil, and the surrounding country is safe. But it appears that safe as it is, the "Sea of Learning" has taken the precaution to send to the governor of the town to get my escort

increased to eight. When I hear this I remonstrate,—saying that it is a needless trouble as there are no evil-disposed men about. The Mujtahed replies that it is always well to have a sufficient escort, and that as I am his friend, he would not on any account have me exposed to danger of molestation.

At half-past nine in the evening I set out from the venerable Mujtahed's house and proceed to the market-place where the mounted escort are to meet me. A relative of the kindly old man accompanies me on the way. The gates of the town are of course closed, but the Governor himself comes down to see me out of a postern into the great dry ditch, and we are soon in the plain outside the town. The moon is at its full, and the pure fresh breeze blowing from the Nejd gives one a sense of lightness and health and enjoyment not felt in every climate. When we get across the plain and approach the embankments of the old canal which we noticed soon after leaving Kufa, the zaptiehs observe some horsemen in the shadow of the mounds. One immediately dashes on at a gallop to reconnoitre. He signals to the rest, and they go forward for a couple of hundred yards, and then dismount and run towards the mound in skirmishing order. The horses and donkeys appear to understand that something serious is at hand, for they cower together and stand stock still in a little circle. Presently the zaptiehs begin to fire their rifles to make a moral impression on the enemy. I discharge my revolver with the same intention. Three Arabs with their long spears ride off along the other side of the

embankment, and we all remount and resume our march. The three Arabs were doubtless the scouts of a larger body concealed at a little distance. Finding that the party was strong in numbers and well armed, the prowlers took themselves off, and waited for wayfarers not so well able to defend themselves.

We then proceeded triumphantly on our way to Kufa, where the village dogs alone were awake. Having paid and dismissed the four soldiers of my escort provided at Nejef, I re-embarked with the rest of the party in the boat on the Hindiah canal, and the wind now serving, we made sail for Kifl. At the first streak of dawn, Haji Mohammed, the Residency kawas, who was very pious, intoned his prayers with great earnestness and devotion, winding up with an "Allah Akhbar!" delivered like a long Amen. The effect was peculiarly solemn, the words having a weird and mystic sound in the still air of the desert, through which they seemed to make their way to the infinite. When Haji Mohammed had finished his devotions, the soldiers and the boatmen said their paternoster in turn, but they had not been to Mecca, and their prayers were wanting in unction.

At half-past four o'clock we arrived at Kifl. The boat was made fast to a tree, and the party breakfasted while waiting for the opening of the synagogue in which is the tomb of Ezekiel. At five o'clock I went on shore to visit the tomb. The synagogue is a large building, with a blue dome and a minaret, quite in the style of a mosque. According to tradition it is built on a tower constructed by the King of Judah who was taken

prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar, liberated by his son, and presented with a quantity of land in these parts.

"Kifl" means "surety," and the place was so named because the Prophet Ezekiel stood forth there as surety for the innocence of the Jews, at a moment when they were in great danger of persecution in consequence of the calumnies of their enemies. The tomb has been for ages an object of veneration to Jews and Moslems alike, and the number of miraculous cures effected through its sanctity is not to be reduced to figures. When I reached the building I found the doors open, and no difficulty whatever was made about admission. A Rabbi was reading a portion of Scripture in a peculiar monotone. A couple of score of worshippers were present. The interior of the building is somewhat dark and begrimed, and I could not see the remains of the life-size portraits of King Jehoiachim and Ezekiel which it is said once adorned the walls. The general aspect of the place denotes decay and poverty. The Mussulman who accompanied me walked straight across the central hall, where divine worship was in progress, to a side hall in which is the tomb of the Hebrew prophet. A large oblong wooden structure, covered with blue cloth, occupies nearly the whole of this lesser hall, and underneath are the canonized bones of Ezekiel. The Mussulman reverently kissed the blue cloth, and I followed his example. A bronzed lamp suspended from the domed roof descends nearly to the catafalque, but it was not lighted. Recesses in the wall contained a number of Hebrew Bibles, which were shown to me by an attendant. These recesses once guarded, it is said, a copy

of the Pentateuch transcribed by the hands of Ezekiel himself, but it has disappeared.

I was invited to go to the top of the minaret to get a bird's-eye view of the country round, and of course I accepted the invitation. The minaret is by no means in good repair, and the gallery around the top is very narrow, and the parapet very low and rickety. The morning breeze was strong, and I had to keep close to the wall to avoid a catastrophe, but the view repaid me for the risk. Desert and marsh pretty equally divided the great plain by which the horizon was bounded on all sides. The desert for the most part was green and fertile-looking; the marshes were in semblance great lakes, the yellow mud of the Euphrates, whose overflow had created them, having fallen to the bottom and left only the clearest water on the surface of the inundated land. In a couple of months the water will have disappeared, and the marshes will breed fever of a very bad kind. To the north-east rises the Birs Nimroud, looking like a mountain with a tower on its summit. Beyond it are low mounds which mark the site of Babylon.

The Jews of Baghdad, and even of Persia, make pilgrimages to the tomb, and every year there is a great festival during the "Feast of Weeks." On the eve of the festival, the congregation go into the synagogue, and the night is spent in reading the book of Ezekiel. An hour before daybreak, the privilege of replacing the covering over the tomb by a new one, and of reading aloud the portion of the book of the Prophet appropriate to the day, is put up to auction, and sold to the highest

bidder. The sale concluded, the covering is changed with great ceremony. Hymns are sung, and the operation lasts about three hours. The reading of the book of the Prophet occupies three hours more. Thus six hours' devotions follow upon the vigils of the night; but the religious fervour of these children of Abraham is equal to the strain. There are other tombs revered by the Jews in the neighbourhood of Kifl, but that of Ezekiel is by far the most considerable. The tomb of Ezra, which is a conspicuous landmark upon the Tigris, midway between Kurnah and Baghdad, is another great shrine, visited yearly by thousands of Jews from distant parts. It is held in great veneration by the Arabs, who believe that no robber could depart from it with any booty he might sacrilegiously lay hands upon within its precincts. Hence, though it contains property of considerable value, it is never plundered by the wild tribes who roam at will in its neighbourhood. The Jews form a very important element in the population of these regions.

Before leaving Kifl I paid a visit to Haji Dirab, the Arab governor of the town. I found him sitting on a mat on the ground in a small enclosure close to the town gate of Kifl; other Arabs were sitting around, smoking and drinking coffee. He was very affable and kindly, and asked me about my journey to Kerbela and Nejef. He told me that sometimes 20,000 people, Jews and Mussulmans, came to Kifl to visit the shrine; they encamped on the plain outside the town. When he learned that I was from Bombay, he inquired about the

Sassoon family, saying that he knew them very well, and he desired to be remembered to them.

At Kifl the horses which we had sent southward from Mosseyib were in waiting for us, and we set out at six o'clock in the morning for the Birs Nimroud, where we arrived at half-past ten, the marshes obliging us to make a little détour.

CHAPTER XII.

BABYLON.

The Birs Nimroud—Supposed to be the Tower of Babel—Probably the Temple of Belus—Ruined by Xerxes—Attempt to rebuild it—Present appearance—Extent of Babylon—Arrival at Hillah—Town built of bricks from Babylon—The Jews of Hillah—Site of Babylon—Searching for bricks—Destruction of remains of buildings—Appearance of the site of Babylon in spring—Return to Baghdad—Traditional brigandage of the Nomads—Improvement during the last twenty years—Occasional outrages—Arabs averse to bloodshed—The Kurds—Measures needed.

For several centuries the Birs Nimroud enjoyed the reputation of being the remains of the Tower of Babel, but the modern archæologists are inclined to believe that it was the famous Temple of Belus, restored or enlarged by Nebuchadnezzar, whose name is on many of the bricks of which it is built. The Temple of Belus was ruined by Xerxes as a punishment for a revolt of the Babylonians. Alexander the Great naturally wished to undo the mischief which the Persian king had wrought, and he employed 10,000 men, for two months, to remove the rubbish which encumbered the ruins, so that he might rebuild the temple. But the task was too great even for Alexander, and he gave it up. The Birs

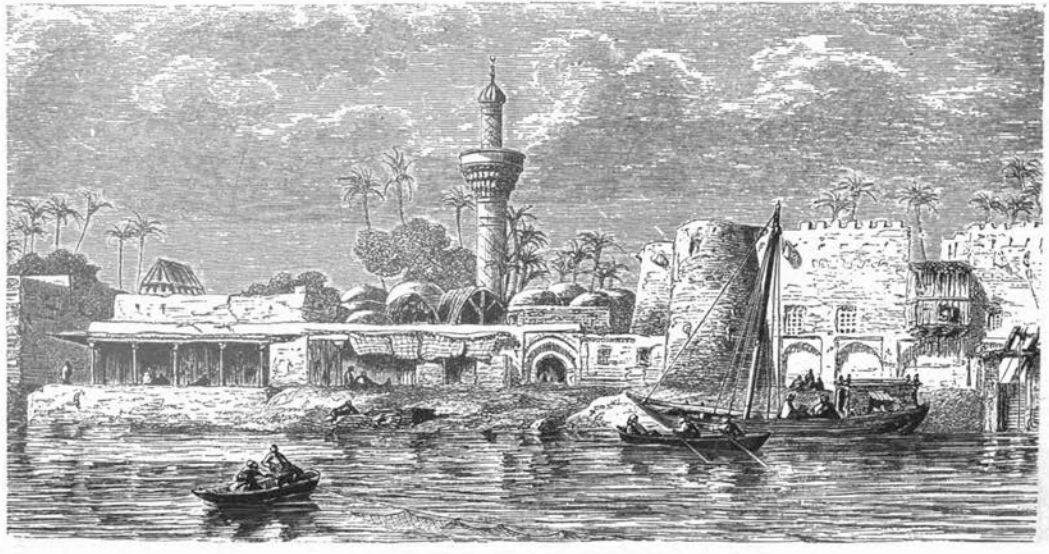
Nimroud looks like a natural hill, but it was built up stage by stage, there being eight in all, each of those above the first being smaller than that on which it rested. The lowest was about 500 feet square, and it is thought that the height of the whole structure was about 500 feet. The upper tiers no longer exist, and the lower ones are a shapeless ruin. On the summit of the apparent hill is a mass of brick-work having the appearance of a tower, about forty feet high, square, erect, but rent from top to bottom. Holes like unto pigeon-holes go through it from side to side. What purpose they were intended to serve, no one can even guess.

At the foot of this tower-like mass lie great boulders of vitrified brickwork, which were evidently fused by fire, from heaven or elsewhere, and hurled from the original summit of the building, which was no doubt a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet higher. The appearance of these masses of fused brickwork very naturally led Jews and Mussulmans to conclude that they had been blasted by lightning at the time of the confusion of tongues, which put a stop to the building of the Tower of Babel by the impious descendants of Noah.

But there is really no evidence that the Birs Nimroud was the Tower of Babel. There is more probability in the theory that it was the Temple of Belus of profane history. The only difficulty in the way is that the temple in question was in Babylon, whereas the Birs is some miles to the south-west of Hillah, and

Hillah is five or six miles south of the ruins of Babylon. But then Babylon the Mighty extended for several leagues over the country on both sides of the Euphrates, and even the Birs, remote as it is, might have stood in one of its remoter quarters. I will not enter into the controversies of archæologists. There is a great mound near the Birs and partly adjoining it; but fragments of pottery and a few pieces of Babylonian glass were all that rewarded a very laborious walk over its whole length, the foot sinking deep in the yielding earth at each step.

From Birs Nimroud I set out a little after noon, and arrived at Hillah at four o'clock. I was very hospitably received in the house of Mr. Yusef Daniel, one of the Jewish community of the town. Believing that I might have conscientious scruples about eating meat killed or cooked in the Jewish manner, my host very thoughtfully procured a Mussulman cook for the occasion, believing apparently that the next thing to a Christian in the matter of food is a Mohammedan. Hillah is a place of some importance. It is built, but not well, of bricks from Babylon. The courtyard of the house where I stopped for the night was paved with large square bricks, every one of which bore the honoured name of Nebuchadnezzar. There is a bridge of boats over the Euphrates, and the town is built on both sides of the river, which is here very picturesque. The accompanying engraving gives a river-side view characteristic of this old town. Splendid groves of date-trees run north and south as far as the eye can see. Rice is grown



HILLAH, ON THE EUPHRATES.

in great abundance in the swampy fields along the river banks.

The Jews of the town of Hillah form a large body, and the capitalists amongst them advance money to the cultivators to make irrigation cuttings and plant crops. It is said that the agriculture, such as it is, of half Mesopotamia, would come to an end if it were not for the Jews of Baghdad and Hillah, who are in that country what the soucars are in India. They carefully abstain from buying land, and as a rule from building houses, so that when the moment comes that summons them to Jerusalem they may not be delayed by the necessity of turning irremovable property into ready money. For the most part they are the descendants of Jews of the Captivity. A Jewish community has lived in this strange land by the waters of Babylon since Israel was led captive, but it has never ceased to yearn for a return, more or less triumphant and miraculous, to the heritage of the seed of Abraham.

Hillah possesses a population estimated at 20,000, and seems to be a busy little town. It was formerly celebrated for its horses, which were considered the best in the Pachalic of Baghdad. If the navigation of the Euphrates were improved by proper attention on the part of the authorities, Hillah would become a place of great importance, for the amount of produce which could be sent down to Bussorah for exportation would be practically unlimited. As it is, great quantities of corn and dates rot unused in and around Hillah, for it does not pay to send such bulky produce on the backs of beasts of

burden across Mesopotamia to Baghdad. The transport of four shillings' worth of grain would cost six shillings. The distance is a three days' journey for laden donkeys.

At half-past four o'clock in the morning of the 15th April, I was *en route* from Hillah to the ruins of Babylon. The Arabs correctly call the site Babel, the real name of the great city, Babylon being a Greek improvement on it. Bab-El means the Gate of God. Babylon, which has come to be regarded as the type of all that is wicked in cities, was originally known to the world for a piety to which Nineveh never had any pretensions. An hour after leaving Hillah we were amongst the ruins of Babylon. There are vast mounds in all directions, which some archæologists have fancied may be grouped out into streets and quarters of the great city which has disappeared for ever. Three or four of the mounds are of greater size than the others, and at once arrest attention. The Arabs have a way of interchanging the names applied to these exceptional mounds, which is a little puzzling for a stranger who has read one or two of the books. The great mound on the right, when going due north from Hillah, called the Kasr in the books aforesaid, is by the Arabs called the Mutehjeb, or overturned. It is a mound of great extent, and in the centre of it stand uncovered great piers of brickwork, evidently portions of a building of importance, doubtless a palace. In another part of the same mound lies the rough-hewn stone figure of a lion with a prostrate man under him. The *débris* now once again covers nearly the whole of this lion, which was

uncovered a few years back. Only a portion of the head and shoulder is at present above the soil.

Farther to the north is a still larger mound, which it is difficult to believe is artificial, it is so vast and precipitous. The Arabs called it Anana, though I expected to hear it called Mutehjeb. It is supposed to be the remains of the famous hanging gardens constructed by the uxorious Nebuchadnezzar to please his wife, who, being a princess from Media, wished to have in Babylon a mountain to remind her of her native land. Great excavations were in progress in this mound when I saw it. A native of Hillah was digging into the vast mass in every direction to find the remains of buildings which would yield him bricks for sale in his native town. I was very civilly conducted over the mound by this worthy, who showed me some fine walls thirty feet down in the earth which he was quarrying away as fast as his Arab labourers could take one brick from another. A score of donkeys were being laden with the spoil. Near the surface of the mound, the brick-finder showed me the entrance to a chamber which he called a serdaub, partly arched over, but where the keystone of the arch might have been expected, the roof was completed by a sheet of excellent concrete forming a sort of artificial stone.

The entrance was nearly choked up with rubbish, but the man told me that he had squeezed himself in, and found the serdaub to be very large, and built of good bricks, which looked as if they had been made only yesterday. When he had removed the bricks from the

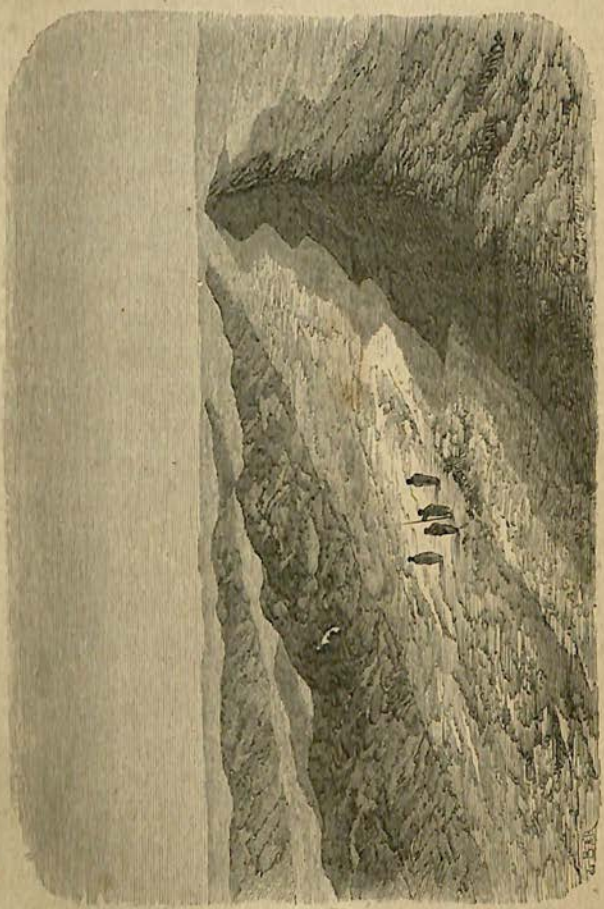
foundations on which his men were then employed, he would, he said, clear out—or "clear away"—the serdaub, and if God willed, he might find something and become a rich man. This would, of course, be satisfactory to the speculator; but the serdaub will disappear from the site of Babylon. Why the Turkish authorities allow the ruins of Babylon to be thus finally ruined, it is not easy to understand. They are quite astute enough to understand that the "antiques" found on these sites have a pecuniary value; and they drove a hard bargain with Sir Austen—then Mr. Layard—when granting the firman under which Mr. Rassam undertook the new excavations at Nineveh. The Ottoman Government stipulated that it was to get one-half the value of all articles found, the valuation to be made by a mixed commission. But in Babylon a bustling brick-merchant was allowed to clear away systematically the remains of vast buildings as fast as he could load his donkeys with what he found, and no one said him nay. Subsequently, when at Constantinople, I ventured to bring this matter to the notice of Sir Austen Layard, who said he would write to Kadree Pacha, and ask him to put a stop to the vandalism.

It is usual for travellers to dwell upon the utter desolation of Babylon and to paint its site as a strip of desert, especially woe-begone and unfertile. But the eloquent gentlemen who dwell upon this aspect of the place could not have seen it in the middle of April. The date groves and gardens along the banks of the Euphrates are then things of beauty in their fresh spring verdure, and

the plain itself is laid down with crops. Irrigation canals cross it here and there and give trouble to the horseman. No grass grows upon the mounds, and there are patches of the level white with the nitre which is to be found here as in other parts of Mesopotamia; but the surface of the soil is on the whole green, and pleasant to the eye. The glad waters of the river flow on in the bright morning sunshine, with palm and mulberry hanging over its banks, drinking in sap and life. The great city which counted its population by millions, and filled the world with a renown not yet forgotten, has disappeared under the dust of twenty centuries, but nature is as fresh and jocund as when Babylon was still unbuilt. Birds sing overhead in the pleasant spring air; butterflies flutter about in search of flowers; balmy odours regale the sense. It is difficult under the circumstances to feel as one perhaps ought to feel for the great capital which once cumbered this ground. Nature does not mourn for it, and it is hard to be sad at the bidding of sentiment when the bright spring hides its grave.

Having traversed the site of Babylon, and seen the mounds which cover its ruins, I took the track leading northwards to Baghdad. The embankments of ancient canals diapered the face of the country in every direction. They were the chief features of the landscape. The general appearance of these interminable double lines of solid earthwork, which have resisted rain and storm for more than two thousand years, is given in the engraving on the next page, representing a spot which the traveller

passes when approaching the khan of Mahawill, a stopping-place two hours north of Babylon.



EMBANKMENTS OF ANCIENT CANALS.

An Arab woman brought a sheep-skin full of butter-

milk to sell to us while we baited the horses at Mahawill. Buttermilk is a favourite beverage amongst the Arabs, and it is wonderfully refreshing after a long ride in the hot sun. Leaving this station at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, we proceeded at caravan pace to Mahmoudieh, where we arrived at six in the evening. The horses were too tired to go on to Baghdad that night, so it was necessary to make a halt, and we entered the great caravanserai where we had bivouacked when commencing this little tour. The caravanserai was, however, fully occupied, Persians alive and dead filling every available inch of space. The dead Persians, on their way to be buried at Kerbella, were bolt upright in their green coverings, their backs being supported against the wall. The Persians whose turn was yet to come sat on the ground at their feet, or in the little recesses I have already described. Some were busy preparing their evening meal, and others who had already dined amused themselves chattering and smoking. Camels and horses and mules were mingled inextricably with the crowd. It was clear that there was no room for me in this inn, so I backed my horse out—there was no room to turn—and sought a refuge elsewhere.

After a little search a mud-built coffee-house was found a short distance down the road. A number of Arabs were sitting cross-legged on long wooden benches at the door, silently smoking, and occasionally swallowing the tiny cups of coffee beloved of the race. The first of the benches which was vacated was made over to me as a bed for the nonce. The horses were made fast close by,

and a couple of men engaged to watch them during the night. I was advised to keep my revolver where it could be easily got at, and I put it under the bag which served as a pillow. Then, after an informal dinner, I lay down and slept soundly until awakened, according to orders, at three o'clock in the morning. Breakfast over, and the horses saddled, we resumed our journey to Baghdad, arriving there at seven in the morning of the 16th April.

I had thus accomplished a pilgrimage which would ensure my salvation hereafter if I had the good fortune to be a Shiah Mahomedan, and may even do something towards it as things stand. The pilgrimage was not yet complete, however, for I had not visited Kazimaine, a shrine near Baghdad, where two sainted Imaums of the Shiah sect are interred. But this duty, as the reader will see, I performed a little later on.

Throughout the whole of this tour, which lasted six days and extended to the wilder country west of the Euphrates, and southward near to the borders of the Arabian desert, I had not been once actually molested, though on two occasions there was certainly some danger of trouble with Arab marauders. The fanaticism of the inhabitants of the holy cities, of which I had heard a good deal before setting out, was not made apparent either by word or sign. I was never once the object of even a discourteous stare in Kerbella or Nejef, or at any of the stopping-places. It is doubtful whether a native of Turkish Arabia could go through some of the remoter districts of England

and say the same at the end of his journey. At Nejef, while in the house of the "Sea of Learning," the chief of the religious hierarchy of the place, I expressed a wish to see the entrance of the great mosque from the market-place, and forthwith lanterns were procured, and, some of the younger members of the household accompanying me, I was taken to the crowded market-place. Just opposite the great gallery of the mosque is a small military post in which half-a-dozen Turkish regulars were on duty. Stepping up on the raised bank in front of the little station so as to see over the heads of the people, I was of course observed by those about, and a little crowd of the curious gathered to have a look at the Frank who was looking at the mosque. But they did not press forward rudely; they kept civilly at a little distance, and refrained from indulging in a single disrespectful expression. The lofty gateway of the mosque, and the simplicity of its style, resembling that of the tomb of Humayoon, near Delhi, interested me much, but I was still more struck by the self-respect and good manners of the riff-raff of the market-place of Nejef.

The insecurity resulting from the traditional brigandage of the nomadic Arabs has been much diminished during the last twenty years by the action of the Turkish authorities at Baghdad. Until the regular troops were sent to the seat of war within the last two years, the Arabs found robbery on a paying scale very unsafe. But when they found the country denuded of troops, they plucked up courage, and outrages became frequent. I have mentioned what I was almost a witness to on the first night

after leaving Baghdad for the shrines. On my return journey on the 15th April across Mesopotamia, I heard of a great battle which had taken place the night before between the Beni Issar and the Motaseib, in which several lives were lost. A mare belonging to the sheik of the Beni Issar had been stolen, and the result was war between the tribes, and general disturbance, in spite of the diplomatic intervention of the Baghdad administrators, who offered the robbed sheik two mares if he would forego vengeance for the one stolen. Even close to the gates of Baghdad very audacious robberies were perpetrated by small parties of Arabs. An official was knocked off his horse and dangerously wounded, the robbers making off with the horse. The next day another Turk was set upon and received wounds which were thought to be fatal. But though these events, which all occurred within the space of eight or ten days, created considerable alarm, it would be a mistake to suppose that the country is falling into anarchy. The habit of obeying the Government has been formed, and the tribes are very loth to rebel, and run the risk of severe chastisement. Isolated acts of murder and robbery can be repressed and punished by a proper display of vigour, and the return of the troops will enable the Government to reassert its authority wherever it has been slighted.

It is a very satisfactory circumstance that the Arabs, like the Kurds of whom we shall see something later on, are not given to fighting *à outrance* when they meet with determined opposition. Ineffectual resistance is sure to be furiously resented, and will, as a matter of

course, cost the victim his life. But if a party be well-armed and sufficiently strong to make the issue at all doubtful, neither Arab nor Kurd will seriously attack it. The object of the Arab is, in nearly all cases, robbery pure and simple. He usually addresses the wayfarer in a little speech calculated at once to reassure him with regard to his life, and to make him resigned to the loss of his property. "I am a man who fears God," the pious brigand will say, "and therefore I do not wish to kill you. Give me all that you have, and go your way in peace!" Having stripped the traveller literally to the skin, the Arab, who is not altogether a bad fellow, will put him on the road to his destination, and if the distance be great, will bestow on him a handful of dates to keep him from starving. The more truculent Kurd is incapable of showing so much consideration. He has a disagreeable way of prefacing robbery by murder, even when no resistance is attempted. He carries a long gun, and his usual challenge to stand and deliver is made by discharging it at you point blank. The chances are that he will miss his mark, for his long gun is by no means a weapon of prècision, but if he brings you down, he will be highly pleased with his skill. Still neither Kurds nor Arabs care for downright hard fighting when out on a raid. They will not stand a steady volley, and they never join issue with a body of Government troops, however small. This does not arise from want of personal courage, for individually the Arab and the Kurd is as brave as the Turk; but they feel instinctively that unorganized and undisciplined as

they are, they have no chance against trained soldiers, supplied with European weapons.

The task of keeping the predatory tribes in Mesopotamia in comparative order is therefore by no means so difficult as might be supposed. If military posts were established at well-chosen points between Baghdad and Hillah and Mosseyib, and along the banks of both rivers southward from these points, a couple of regiments of irregular cavalry, recruited in part from the Arabs themselves, would keep the great trade and caravan routes throughout Turkish Arabia as safe as need be. Similar posts should be established at intervals along the routes through which the post-route passes in the country visited by the nomadic Kurds, and the intervening distances regularly patrolled. In addition to these measures of police, the sheiks themselves should be taken into Government pay, and made Government officials, responsible for the safety of life and property in the districts assigned to their tribes. They should be invested with full magisterial powers over the people of their clans, and brought by degrees to report to the Government the number and nature of the punishments inflicted. The Turks are quite able to carry out a steady policy of this kind. I have mentioned in one of the earlier chapters how the subordinate Pashalic of Bussorah was made a waliat, or governor-generalship, in order to tempt the sheik of the powerful tribe of the Montefiks to accept it; and during his tenure of office, the Montefik country itself was made subordinate to Bussorah, as Bussorah had been

formerly subordinate to Baghdad. The sheiks, with a little management, might be induced in the course of a few years to look to the Government for pay and position, and increase of dignity, and in return keep order, and introduce the rudiments of civilization amongst their clans. The first requisite, of course, would be to gain their confidence. The Arabs, hitherto, have had but too much reason to complain of want of faith on the part of the representatives of the Government. Promises, made on the Koran itself, have been shamefully broken. But if the sheiks were once brought to see that the old system was at an end, and that they might trust implicitly in whatever arrangements were made with them, they would soon become the willing agents of the Government, for they have been forced to acknowledge its superior strength, and the hopelessness of defying it in arms. A score or two of military posts connected by the telegraph, a few squadrons of specially trained *gendarmerie*, commanded by men of determination and energy, and the systematic employment of the Arab sheiks themselves as paid Government officials, would render the caravan routes of this country as safe as the roads in any district in India.

CHAPTER XIII.

ABOUT BAGHDAD.

Visit to the Governor-General—The Eastern Question—Turkish officials—Mushir Hussein Pasha—The Persian Consul—A complicated case—The French Consul—Fussiness of some Consuls of that nation—A remarkable incident—The shrine at Kazimain — Zobeide's tomb — Haroun-al-Raschid's house—Akarkouf—Site of a forgotten city.

On the 18th of April the British Political Agent, Colonel Nixon, paid a round of official visits, and I, as a guest at the Residency, accompanied him. The streets are too narrow and tortuous and uneven to admit of carriages in any case, and too dirty and crowded to make walking agreeable, or, on state occasions, even possible. Of necessity, therefore, Colonel Nixon, myself, and the dragoman of the Residency were on horseback. We rode in single file through the streets and busy bazaars, preceded by half a dozen stout kawasses to clear the way of porters carrying burdens, and force laden donkeys, and obstinate mules, down the nearest side streets, so that the cavalcade could get along without being brought to a stand at every step. The British Political Agent was, I noticed, saluted with great respect, and even cordiality, by people of all classes and creeds, Mussulman, Christian, and Jewish.

The first visit was, of course, to the Governor-General, Kadree Pasha. His Excellency was at work in his office when we arrived, but came out at once, and ushered his visitors into the reception-room. This was a large apartment, plainly furnished in the European style, with the modern divan, which is gradually approximating in height and appearance to the Western sofa. An interpreter was not needed, the Pasha speaking French with facility. After the usual compliments, conversation very naturally turned upon the latest phase of the Eastern Question. His Excellency said he had read in the *Times of India* that it was understood that Russia desired that England should take possession of Egypt: she was pressing Austria to take Bosnia and Herzegovina—"*elle fait des generosités*," said he, "*avec les biens d'autrui.*" The political situation, he considered, could not well be more complicated or more grave, but the force of events would bring about a solution.[1] England, he said, had hesitated too long, and her hesitation had placed her in the midst of difficulties which might have been in great part avoided. In an article which he had just read in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the peculiar attitude of England and its

[1] It may be interesting even now to give verbatim a note which I made the evening before this conversation with Kadree Pacha :— "The question of the moment here is, which side Turkey will take in the fight that appears to be impending between Russia and England? The latest telegrams from Constantinople state that Turkey will endeavour to remain neutral. But the bazaar has it that Turkey is bound by a secret engagement to take part with Russia; and that seems to be the general impression here as well as at Bussorah."

causes, as well as its consequences, were very ably examined. Mr. Gladstone's influence was answerable for a good deal, and the vacillation of Lord Derby was also very unfortunate. But the well-established and sound policy of England was to maintain the balance of power in Europe, and she was certain to revert to that sooner or later. Kadree Pacha discussed the question with great good sense and acuteness, and without the least trace of bitterness or heat. I have heard from people not usually given to praising Turkish officials that Kadree is a man of capacity and energy, and, so far as is known, of probity. If he is left five years in the governor-generalship, he will doubtless make his mark on the vast province committed to his charge. But it has hitherto been the misfortune of Turkey that no official is sure of his post from month to month, or at all events from year to year, unless he be willing to secure it by bribing those who have the patronage in their gift. And to get the means of bribing others, a man must take bribes himself. This is one of the causes of the laxity and corruption which paralyze the Turkish administration all over the empire, and endanger its very existence. Kadree Pasha is, I am told, setting his face very resolutely against the perfunctory or corrupt performance of public duty, and one cannot but wish him well. He is personally very active, and has created great consternation by visiting the different departments unexpectedly, and overhauling matters on the spot. This is a portentous innovation for a great official in Turkey.

After coffee and cigars had been handed round, we took leave of the Governor-General, and proceeded to the quarters, in the same building, of the Mushir Hussein Pasha, the Field-Marshal commanding the troops in the pashalic. The Mushir has the reputation of being a good organizer, and has been in command of the troops in this province four or five years. He speaks French, but not fluently, and during the brief visit, he seemed to be rather nervously anxious not to express any opinion one way or the other on political matters. When I said that according to the telegrams from Europe, war between England and Russia appeared to be probable, he simply replied, "*Espérons un bon résultat.*"

Having left the Serai or Government-House, we proceeded to the Persian Consulate, to see Mohamed Ali Khan, the representative of the Shah in Baghdad. The Persian Consul is very European in complexion and appearance, and he speaks French perfectly. He told me that he had travelled all over India, having been to Lahore, Delhi, Lucknow, and the other great cities, as well as Bombay. With respect to the pilgrimage of the Persians to the shrines beyond the Euphrates, he said that the conditions which were being negotiated between Turkey and Persia had not yet been finally settled, and that the old rush of pilgrims would not set in until all the difficulties had been removed. From what I heard I was inclined to think that the Court of Persia is in no particular hurry to remove these difficulties, whatever they may now be. The Shah is very anxious to secure for the Persian shrines within his own dominions the

revenues which in ordinary times go to swell the gains of the inhabitants of Kerbella and Nejef.

While Colonel Nixon was at the Persian Consul's, a singular-looking man, wearing an enormous Indian turban, was, at his own request, brought in to see "the English Beg," and ask the protection of the British flag in a case which may be mentioned as a sample of the complicated affairs which consuls at Baghdad have sometimes to deal with. Two houses in Baghdad, the property of a former king of Oude, were sold thirty years ago to a Persian subject. They were not sold by the king, to whom they belonged, but by his son. The king when he heard of the sale, repudiated it; the Persian, however, having paid his money, kept the houses. In due time the king died, and the two houses, with other property, fell to forty-seven of his Majesty's heirs. The forty-seven or their representatives have now sent this man with the enormous turban to recover the two houses from the Persian. He is not a British subject, but an Osmanli; and representing forty-seven British subjects, he claims the protection of the British Political Agent, and asks him to make the Persian give him up the two houses. The Persian Consul is, on the other hand, besought by the Persian who paid for the houses to see justice done. The houses are neither British nor Persian, but Turkish. Therefore the Ottoman Courts must decide the question of their legal ownership. "What is the use of going to the Ottoman Courts without your protection?" said the Osmanli with the Indian turban, when Colonel Nixon told him where his legal remedy lay.

"If you give protection, it will be all right; but if not, the houses will never be got out of the hands of the Persian!" Whereupon the Persian Consul smiled blandly. Possession is nine points of the law in Baghdad as elsewhere.

A visit to M. Destrées, the French Consul, brought the morning's round of visits to a close.

M. Destrées is a man of considerable energy and intelligence, and is, like most French consuls in this country, decorated, so that he may have the more weight with the Turkish officials, upon whose nerves it is his duty to act. The British Government neglects this means of adding to the personal dignity of its representatives. I believe M. Destrées is on very good terms with the Turks, and is by no means a source of worry and anxiety to the Baghdad officials. But from all I can learn, the consuls of France, as a body, make it their business in life to interfere in everything that passes, when they can; find out grounds—good, bad, or indifferent—to make a "representation" to their Ambassador at Constantinople, and when he can come down upon the Porte with a strong remonstrance, they are supremely happy. They often, no doubt, do good in this way, but their fussiness does not advance the influence of their country to the extent they suppose; they come to be regarded, in many cases, as mosquitoes and gad-flies are regarded, as plagues and torments, for which nature supplies no remedy, and which must therefore be endured.

During the time of the second Empire, a nephew of

Marshal Pelissier represented France at Baghdad, and he naturally considered himself a very great personage, which indeed he was in those days. One evening, at a grand assembly at the house of the Governor-General, he went up to an old Sheik, at least eighty years of age, and of extraordinary piety, who was seated cross-legged on the divan. The aged saint had a long white beard, which added greatly to his venerable appearance. When the bustling Frenchman came up and saluted him he was dozing, according to one account, or was a little absent in mind, according to another, and he failed to rise to return the salutation. "What!" cried out the indignant nephew of the terrible Marshal, "I, the representative of his Majesty the Emperor, salute you, and you do not rise to return the salutation! What insolence!" And seizing the white beard of the amazed octogenarian, he gave it a pull which nearly tore off jaw and all. Imagine the universal consternation! Every Moslem present felt the insult; but how resent it? The irate consul strode out of the hall in dudgeon,—he was the representative of a great Power, and to kick him as he left, might have brought Heaven and Earth together. The exploit was regarded by the consul and his friends as a heroic vindication of the insulted majesty of France; and a long and glowing account of it was published in the Paris papers. If an English consul had so acted, he would have considered it advisable to keep the incident out of the papers, for his recall would be inevitable the moment it came to the ears of his official superiors. As for the poor Sheik, he went home

and died heart-broken at the outrage to which he had been subjected in his old age.

On the 19th April I completed my pilgrimage to the Shiah shrines by a visit to Kazimain, about four miles south of Baghdad. A tramway, the work of Midhat Pasha, takes the pilgrim from the city to the shrine in perfect comfort for the sum of twopence halfpenny. The carriages are like those of the tramways in London, with seats on the roof as well as inside, and they carry between forty and fifty passengers at each journey. A company now works the line, and, it is said, realizes a profit of cent. per cent. on the original outlay. It is the first instance of joint-stock enterprise in Baghdad. Midhat Pasha when he set the project on foot had to put some unofficial pressure on Government subordinates and others, to induce them to take shares—one or two each generally. They thought they were giving their money for bits of paper of no value, but afterwards when the dividends came in they were greatly delighted with their speculation. Shares cannot now be purchased in Baghdad; there are no sellers. The total cost of the tramway was, I understand, 18,000*l*. About sixty houses standing on the proposed line had to be expropriated. The suburb of Kazimain is large and populous, and its inhabitants contribute no doubt to swell the income derived from the pilgrims. The complete financial success of this tramway gives great plausibility to the arguments of those who maintain that a cheap railway to Kerbella would repay the capital expended on it in three years. The tramway car in which I went to Kazimain was

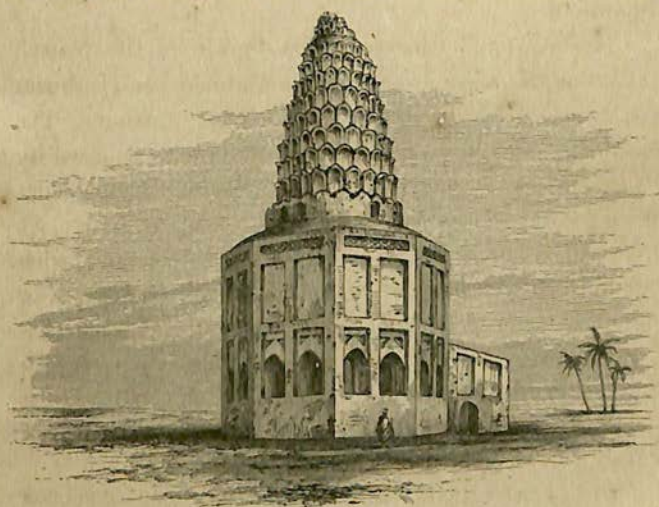
filled with Arabs, there being only one or two pilgrims amongst them. A couple of powerful horses ran the car to Kazimain in thirty minutes. The line is single, with two passing stations on the way. No cars run between twelve and two, or after sunset.

Kazimain owes its name to one of the two holy men whose tombs are the object of so much veneration—Imaum Moussa Kazim and Imaum Toukah.

I viewed the shrine from the terrace of the Nawab Ikhball-oo-Dowla's country-house, which his Highness kindly placed at my disposal for the occasion. The mosque is a large quadrangular structure surmounted by two handsome domes completely gilt, the drums from which they rise being also covered with gilding. At each of the four corners of the mosque is a minaret, with gilt top, and at each of the corners of the quadrangle in which the mosque stands, rises a minaret of considerable height and graceful proportions. These minarets are not gilt, but are covered with encaustic tiles, those above the line of the gallery being a bright blue. A grove of palms surrounds the whole.

On my way back to Baghdad from Kazimain I visited the tomb of Zobeide—a name dear to all who have read the Arabian Nights. The lovely queen of Haroun-al-Raschid lies buried in an octagonal structure on the western bank of the Tigris, close to the suburb which is all that remains of old Baghdad. The material employed in its construction was brick, covered with white stucco, and it is now falling to decay. From the octagonal body of the building rises a sort of cone with rough

sides not unlike a huge pine-apple. In all the roughnesses there are holes which are not seen from outside, but within the building they show like "the interstices between the reticulations" of lace-work, and the effect is not inelegant. The height of the whole is about seventy feet, the cone being about thirty. The sepulchre lies below, exactly in the centre of the building. The



ZOBEIDE'S TOMB.

apex of the cone having fallen in upon it, it has been reduced to a heap of broken bricks. There are cracks in the walls in several places, and the perilous staircase by which I ascended to the roof is nearly worn away. The building is at night a resort for robbers on the look-out for people *en route* from Baghdad to Hillah or Mosseyib.

This tomb was doubtless built in the middle of old Baghdad. The present city on the eastern bank of the Tigris was built by Haroun-al-Raschid, and his house still stands there and is an object of reverent curiosity to the Persians who pass through the city on their way to the great shrines. The Sitt-el-Zobeide or the Lady Zobeide was so named from the great Zobeide tribe of Arabs occupying the country east and west of the Euphrates near the Hindiah canal; she was the daughter of a powerful sheik of that tribe.

Conspicuous in the open plain, six or seven miles north of Zobeide's tomb, rises Akarkouf,[2] a singular pile about a hundred and thirty feet high, and three hundred feet in circumference. It is built of sun-dried bricks in courses, with layers of reeds between. Square holes go through the solid structure from side to side, similar to those in the tower-like mass on the summit of the Birs Nimroud. The structure rises from the crown of a mound apparently formed by the débris of other structures. It is supposed that Akarkouf is the last vestige of a great Babylonian city which existed on this plain ages before old Baghdad was founded, and that its total disappearance is due to the fact that its materials were used to construct the city which succeeded it. The remains of a great canal cross the plain to the north of Akarkouf; so that there need have been no want of water in the extinct city. The word Akarkouf is not Arabic; it is believed to be Babylonian, and the Arabs curiously enough apply it to the ground around the structure rather than to the structure

[2] See the Engraving at page 224.

AKKAR-KOUF, NEAR OLD BAGHDAD.

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itself, which they generally call Tell Nimroud or the Hill of Nimroud. Akarkouf is supposed to be the Babylonian name of the city, which, there is little doubt, once existed on this site. The Tell Nimroud, like the Birs Nimroud of Babylon, was most probably crowned by a temple to the sun, visible in its great elevation not only to the whole city, but to all who dwelt in the Mesopotamian plain for many a league around.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF BAGHDAD.

Mixed population—All Arabic speaking—Arab labourers—Arab ideas of female honour—The duty of revenge—Fraternal Justice—Modern degeneracy—The birth of a girl a misfortune—Grief of the mother—Bedouin lovers—Arab Chivalry—Maidens leading the charge—Omar Pasha and his captives—Women among the sedentary Arabs—The Jews of Baghdad—Early marriages—Three Sabbaths weekly at Baghdad—The Jewish Sabbath—Jewish artificers—The Armenians—Supposed Russian sympathies—Armenian ladies—Marriages with Europeans—Their street dress—Mussulman women—Their beauty—Position of the Armenian wife—Women of the lower orders—European community in Baghdad—The Greeks—Cafés—Turkish baths—The date mark—Nature of the malady—Belief in talismans.

The population of Baghdad is very mixed, but Arabic is the language spoken by all residents, whether of Arab, Turkish, Jewish, Armenian, Chaldean, or European birth or descent. The Arab section of the population is constantly recruited by accessions from the neighbouring desert tribes. Coming to the city to trade, year after year, the sons of the desert are gradually familiarized with city life, and many of them are tempted by the prospect of earning regular wages to accept employment, and make their homes within the

walls. They are capable of great exertion, though they by no means like the drudgery of continuous labour; nevertheless, they form the labouring population of the place. The more muscular, if less hardy, Chaldeans are in greater request, especially with European employers, for they are amenable to discipline, and work in a methodical, hum-drum fashion, which sets a master's mind at ease; but in Baghdad they are too few to compete seriously with Arab labour.

It is said that the Arabs who settle in the towns deteriorate in some respects. In a generation or two they lose the iron constitutions which are the best inheritance of the children of Ishmael who dwell in the pure air of the desert. The Arab women of the towns do not enjoy that reputation for incorruptible virtue which is the brightest ornament of the wives and daughters of the Bedouins. In the desert, immorality is by no means unknown, but it is almost invariably punished with death by the injured husband, or by the brother of the girl. The unsophisticated Arab is very sensitive upon the point of female honour; the least reproach about the behaviour of wife, or sister, or other female relative cuts him to the quick. Revenge is a duty which he never neglects; but in these degenerate times it is not always safe for those dwelling in or around a great city to fulfil that duty, however sacred, in the face of Turkish authorities, who are very unsympathetic, and laws which are not always inoperative. But thirty or forty years ago, if an Arab, jealous of the honour of his family, in the course of an altercation

in a coffee-shop, had a cruel taunt with regard to his sister flung in his teeth, he went home, and addressing his relative who had forgotten herself in an affectionate way, so as not to arouse her suspicions, he would say—"Come, my girl, we will go to the tents of So-and-so, and pay a visit!" When he arrived with his victim at a convenient spot in the desert, where no one could hear her cries, or interrupt the course of fraternal justice, he would upbraid her for bringing dishonour on her family, and having put her to death, bury her in the sand. Having accomplished this duty, he would return with head erect among his equals, who would understand what had happened, and say one to the other, "Wah! what a good man! His sister brought shame upon him, and he took her into the desert and slew her!"

If, as sometimes happened, the news of this extra-judicial execution reached the ears of the old-fashioned pasha, and the virtuous young man were summoned to the tribunal of judgment, the defence was not a denial or a subterfuge; the Arab would hold up his hand, and say, "My finger had a gangrene in it, and I cut it off! Would I throw away my own flesh if it were good? She was my sister, and would I have put her to death if it were not necessary?"

The intelligent Baghdadi who gave me this account of the ways and customs of the old times, not so very long gone by, added, in a tone of admiration, "And then the pasha would tell them to let the young man go, and perhaps even give him a present for acting so

well, and avenging the honour of his family! But now, if an Arab were to do the same, they would say to him, 'Are you, then, a pasha, that you should punish the guilty? Who made you a judge over your sister, to try and condemn her, and put her to death?' And they would put him in prison, or perhaps even hang him. A girl now may do what she pleases, for no one can punish her if she does wrong. That is the reason the Arab women in Baghdad are not like the women of the desert; for there, if they do wrong, they know well what to expect."

It was evident to me that my informant considered that civilization was lowering the standard of morality in and around Baghdad, and that things were much better under the system which prevailed, according to him, until within the last thirty or forty years: but I think he was inclined to exaggerate the extent of the mischief. The Arab women of Baghdad, from all I could learn, are well conducted, and contribute but very few to the number of adventuresses which, as is well known, the City of the Caliphs sends to Bombay and the cities of Northern India. The said adventuresses are almost invariably either Armenians or Jewesses.

If the Arab women were other than they are, their lords and masters would not be entitled to much commiseration, for Arabs treat their womenkind very badly. The birth of a girl is regarded as a misfortune and a humiliation for the family in which the untoward event occurs. Before Mohammed's time, as every one knows, the Arab used to get rid of this disgrace by burying the

luckless infant in the sand. It is the chief glory of the Prophet that he peremptorily abolished the custom of female infanticide; but the old barbarous aversion to female offspring remains strong in every Arab breast; it is shared even by the women themselves. When a boy is born everybody rejoices and congratulates the distinguished parents; but for the advent of a girl the mother herself will weep bitter tears, and all the gossips come in and console her, as if a death had taken place in the family.

However, the star of beauty has its influence, even among the Arabs. Bedouin lovers suffer pangs from unrequited affection, and they cut and slash themselves to denote outwardly the rents which they feel in their susceptible hearts. Stranger still, when a tribe goes forth to fight, it mounts one or two young maidens on the best mares, and puts them in the post of honour in the forefront of battle, delighting in their encouraging gestures. and warlike songs and cries. If they are captured, or fall, the cavaliers lose heart, and give up the battle; while they advance, the chivalry of the desert is bound to follow. It is therefore a great object in these encounters to capture or kill the young damsels whose voices and example inflame the ardour of the charging enemy. While the famous Omar Pasha was Governor-General of Baghdad, an Arab tribe, which was making war against the Government, was hemmed in between the Euphrates and a canal in such a position that escape was impossible. Two girls of the tribe, splendidly mounted, charged the Turkish troops at the

head of the fighting-men. They came straight at a gun, which was discharged point blank at them, or rather at the men following them; their horses swerving suddenly, saved them from being blown to pieces, and they were captured, and brought into Baghdad. Omar Pasha gave them into the care of his wife, and had them splendidly attired, making them many presents. After treating them like princesses for two months, he offered to have them married to any of fifteen of his principal officers, whom they might prefer, and he told them that he would assemble those eligible in divan, so that they might unseen make their own choice; if they rejected that offer, and preferred to return to their tribe and the desert, he would send them back. They refused even to look at the fifteen eligible officers, and begged to be sent back to their former life in the desert, which Omar Pasha accordingly did. There is room for chivalry and romance even in the conflicts of Turks with Arab nomads.

Among the sedentary Arabs the women, however subject to their husbands in theory, often assert their rights very vigorously in practice. They milk the sheep and goats, and make the butter, and selling it, keep the purse. In all relating to the home they assert their supremacy. In the villages, and when working in the fields, which their labour often keeps in cultivation, they go unveiled, as do their sisters of the lower class in prudish Baghdad itself; but on the whole, they have hard, laborious lives, and the traces of toil and hardship are stamped indelibly on their countenances

while they are still young. It is, doubtless, owing to this cause that amongst the Arabs the women are far indeed from being as good-looking as the men.

The Jews of Baghdad number nearly a third of the population of the town, amounting according to some computations to 25,000, though I think the estimate of 20,000 is more likely to be correct. Like the people of their race all over the world, they prefer trade to manual labour, and the capitalists amongst them are the money-lenders and bankers of the Pashalic. Early marriages and large families are the rule amongst them, and the natural result is that the bulk of the community is very poor and ignorant. Children who ought to be at school, are required to add in any manner possible to the family earnings, and until quite recently it was found to be a most difficult task to get parents to consent to boys "wasting their time" at school: secular learning was, besides, regarded as a danger to the faith. But the money value of book-learning is now becoming recognized, and we may look for a great change in the habits and condition of the community in the course of a few years.

Baghdad enjoys two if not three Sabbaths or days of rest in the week. The Mussulmans keep Friday holy; the large Jewish section of the population observe the Sabbath on the Saturday, and the Armenians and other Christians observe the Sunday. The Jewish bazaar, one of the most considerable in the city, is closed indeed not only on the Saturday, but for a good part of Friday as well. On Friday afternoons at two o'clock all

business ceases amongst the Jews, and the commercial houses are closed. Each Israelite returns to his home, puts on his best garments, and hurries to the Synagogue, where afternoon service is performed, lasting until an hour before sunset. All then return to their families, sing pious songs in Hebrew, and for refreshment drink aniseed brandy. All the Baghdad Jews speak Hebrew as well as Arabic, and they usually keep their accounts in the former language. After sunset the evening meal begins, and it is sometimes prolonged until midnight. On Saturday morning there is service in the Synagogue, after which breakfast is got through, when religious exercises commence, and portions of Scripture are read aloud by the head of the family or some venerable guest. Sometimes several families assemble at these readings; the selections are usually made from the Prophets. Every member of the family listens with much devotion, and strangers within the gates follow their example.

It will perhaps somewhat surprise some readers to learn that when the reading of the Scriptures is over, the rest of the Sabbath is devoted to the interchange of visits and to amusements in the open air. The rich entertain their friends in their beautiful country-houses and palm-gardens on the Tigris. This must not be supposed to be backsliding on their part; it is regarded as the natural and legitimate manner of spending that portion of the Sabbath which is not devoted to religious exercises. J. J. Benjamin, an Israelite of great learning and piety, whose curious work I have already

quoted, speaks of the Baghdadi way of keeping the Sabbath in terms of the highest approval. "With feelings of the highest satisfaction and approval," he says, "I saw how devoutly and solemnly and with what strict attention to the precepts of the law the Sabbath was observed in Baghdad." And he adds, "in no other country that I visited did I find my brethren in the faith so void of care, so happy, so free from persecutions and oppressions of intolerance as at Baghdad." The Jews at Baghdad with whom I conversed bore similar testimony to the complete toleration which they enjoyed under the Turkish Government. Baghdad has been always noted for a certain tolerance of the differences of faith and race, and the Jews owe to that fact, as well as to their numbers, a consideration which is not always accorded to them elsewhere.

The Jewish artificers and traders possess a skill and acuteness denied to the Arab. The Jews are found in every trade, and are regarded as good workmen. Arabs are employed almost exclusively in the rougher kind of manual labour. The old clothes trade of Baghdad is exclusively in the hands of the Jews.

The Armenian community is large, and many of its members are men of substance and influence. The ambition of the average Armenian is to be a clerk or writer rather than a handicraftsman, though many of the race dwelling in Baghdad are engineers, employed in the government factory for the repair of the machinery of the steamboats plying on the Tigris, and other similar works. The Armenian merchants are

wealthy and enterprising, but it is said, are over intellectual; Christians and Jews alike dread their acute and subtle minds. In all the government offices there are Armenian clerks in influential positions, and they have great influence in every department of the state.

Of the capacity of the Armenians no one with whom I conversed at Baghdad or throughout my journey expressed any doubt whatever. They are perhaps the most gifted in mental power of all the races in Asiatic Turkey, but possibly on that very account, there is a general distrust of them on the part not only of the Mussulmans, but even of their fellow Christians. There can be little doubt that they are capable of attaining the highest level of civilization, and they are making daily advances in the direction of education and social power. They are spitefully credited with strong though concealed Russian proclivities; as a people, however, they are loyal to the Ottoman throne. The Russians have no official representatives in Baghdad or in the other cities along the line of country through which I passed; and it is said everywhere that they are kept fully informed of all that passes by means of Armenian agents; this may be true, though as a race, they are not disaffected. The Armenians are commonly reproached with effeminacy and want of warlike aptitude, but physically they are a fine race, and some of the most dashing officers in the Russian service during the recent war in Asia Minor were men of Armenian blood. With the opportunity for distinction in the military art, the race would doubtless display

military virtues for which at present it receives little credit.

The Armenian ladies whom I saw in Baghdad, were remarkably handsome, and, as I before remarked, would have been deemed exceptionally fair even in Western Europe. Most Europeans who settle in Baghdad, while still bachelors, fall victims to their charms, and marry Armenian wives. I have not heard of similar alliances between Europeans in these parts and the women of any other race. After marriage with Europeans, the Armenian ladies dress in the European fashion when at home, but when they go abroad to pay visits, they shroud themselves from head to foot in a sort of double petticoat of some sombre colour, which is in the first instance fastened round the waist, the outer petticoat being then thrown over the head and in part over the face, so that nothing is seen but the half of a roguish eye. A bonnet or hat of the European model is never seen in the streets of Baghdad. If ladies other than Europeans of known position and standing, were to show themselves in the streets with so indecorous a head-dress, leaving the face exposed, they would be hooted at and insulted, not by the boys only but by the adult orthodox of the place.

The Mussulman women, when they go forth from their harems to promenade or to visit, cover their faces with a black horsehair veil, descending like a pent-house from the forehead to a point below the line of the chin, so as to conceal not only the whole of the countenance but even the throat from the gaze of the passers-

by. The outer covering, for it cannot be called a dress, which conceals the figure is generally a dark blue cotton sheet, puckered in at the waist, and only sufficiently short in front to leave visible the whole of a most inelegant pair of yellow boots, reaching above the ancle. These boots are the distinguishing mark of the respectable Mussulman matron, and must not be worn by either Christian or Jewess. It is customary for the ladies thus far rendered outwardly unattractive to enjoy complete liberty of locomotion; they may go anywhere completely unattended, and it is considered rather a mark of distinction to avoid a parade of domestics, or other attendants, which might attract notice. They are very fond of visiting, and when they enter the harems of their female friends, of course no male of the family above ten years of age is allowed to stay there. Safe in the seclusion of those sacred precincts, they remove their horse-hair veils, the shapeless outer robe, and their hideous yellow boots, and dazzle the eyes of their friends with the brilliancy of their silks, the fineness of their gauze-like muslins, and the richness of their gold brocades, curiously worked in a manner for which Baghdad is celebrated.

Many of these invisible Mussulman women are, I am told, very beautiful, and quite as fair as the Armenians. They have some rudiments of knowledge, but as compared to the women of Europe, their education must be pronounced decidedly defective. Education is spreading amongst women of the better class of the Armenian community, and it is of a less oriental stamp than that

of the Moslem ladies, but the general condition of Armenian women in the matter leaves much to be desired: they are not, taken as a body, even on a par with their Moslem sisters. The fair Armenians are not regarded as the equals, but rather as the bond-servants of their husbands. They are married early, often at twelve years of age, without their consent, to men chosen for them by their parents. In her own house the Armenian wife is the slave of her mother-in-law, who directs everything according to her own will and pleasure; she must not sit down unbidden in the presence of her husband, nor even speak to him unless spoken to. When she becomes a mother, the severity of this *régime* is somewhat relaxed, but she must wait until she is a mother-in-law before she can exercise the full rights of a mistress of the household. It is no secret to those who have resided for any length of time in India that a very similar state of affairs characterizes Hindoo and Mussulman households in that country; but, I confess, I was much surprised to learn that it prevailed equally in Christian homes on the banks of the Tigris. Probably it is owing to the fact that the domestic life of the Armenians of the lower classes is so unsatisfactory, that immorality is very prevalent amongst them.

The accompanying engraving of a woman of the lower orders of Baghdad, is from an excellent photograph by M. Sebah, of Constantinople. The downcast and somewhat morose expression is very characteristic of the better half of the population of the city. It is difficult to believe that Baghdad women ever smile. The

long thin features and the ample nose are typical of all Baghdadis both men and women.

The European community in Baghdad is very restricted in numbers. Some years since, several

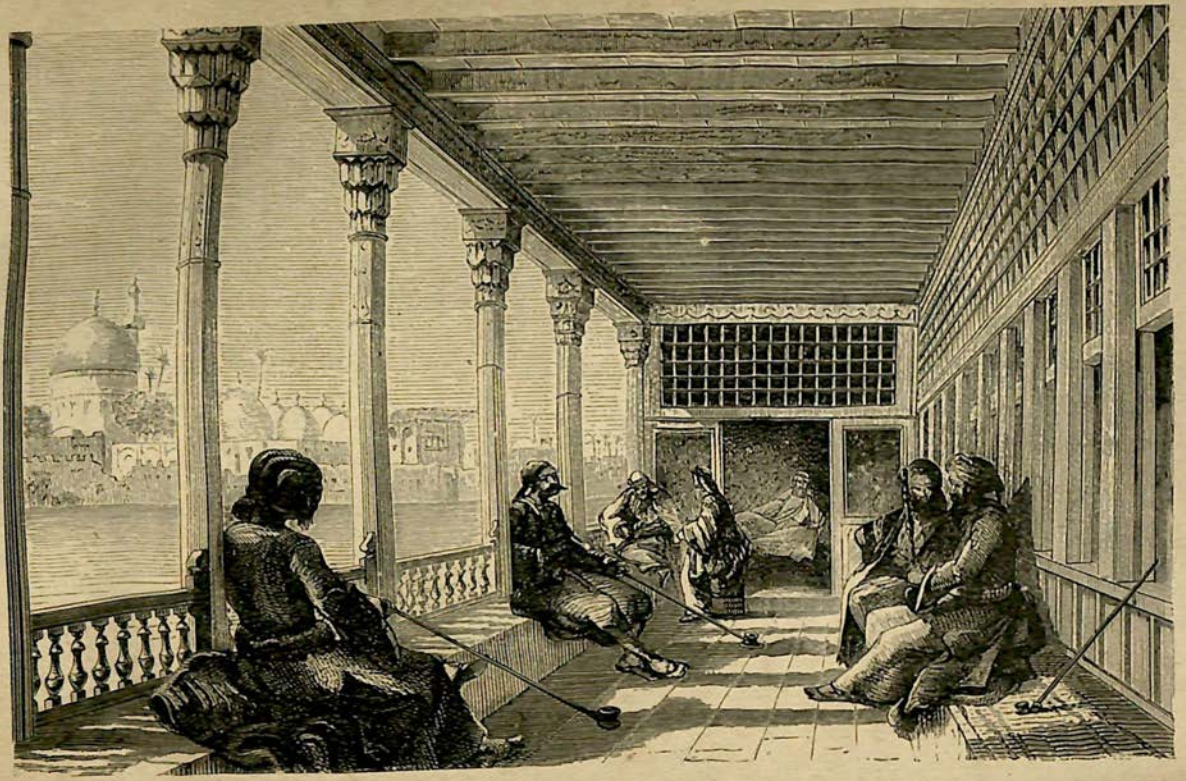
BAGHDAD WOMAN OF THE LOWER ORDERS.

European firms were established in the city, but latterly the competition of the Armenian and Jewish houses has been found too keen for most of them, and now only one or two remain. The officers of the English steamers trading on the river, and those of most of the seven

Turkish steamers, are British, and have their homes in Baghdad. At the large Turkish factory for the repair of the steamers, to which I have already referred, many Europeans are employed. Several Germans are settled in the city: one of these quite recently performed a very difficult and dangerous journey to a remote part of Persia, in the guise of a simple muleteer; his knowledge of Arabic enabled him to pass muster as if he had been an orthodox mule-driver of the country. I was not informed of the motive for this hazardous and toilsome escapade. It is to be hoped that he will yet give to the world the results of his experience.

The Greek residents are for the most part connected with the government offices: they are not numerous. The Turks are nearly all directly or indirectly employed in the Administration: there are very few amongst the non-officials. To the Shiah Mohammedans from India I have already alluded: their number fluctuates; but there are seldom less than two to three thousand in Baghdad itself, without including those settled more or less permanently at Kerbella and Nejef. Some Persians are also to be found amongst the householders and shopkeepers of the city. People from all parts of Asia, dressed in the costumes of their various countries, are to be seen in the bazaars: Bedouins from the great Arabian Desert; wild Kurds from the North; Syrians from Damascus; traders from Affghanistan. Persians, Egyptians, and men from the western coast of India, jostle you at every step.

In the evening, after the labours of the day are over,



COFFEE HOUSE, OVERLOOKING THE TIGRIS, BAGHDAD.

nearly every male in Baghdad goes to the coffee-house, to sit on a wooden bench in the open air, smoke his pipe, and drink coffee out of cups a little larger than thimbles. They sit for the most part grave and silent, thinking of nothing, and happy in the sweet enjoyment of *keff*. Believers of all classes sit side by side, undisturbed by any considerations whatever of those social distinctions which in Europe, even in the most democratic countries, are never absent. Some of the *cafés* are buildings of considerable pretensions, overlooking the Tigris, and their frequenters enjoy the cool air from the river, while lazily contemplating the scene before them. On the opposite page is an engraving which gives a good idea of one of these river-side coffee-houses. The coffee-houses most frequented by the multitude are those, the benches of which line the market-place, near the castle; and others outside the adjacent gate, on the rising ground, overlooking the Meidan. The coffee-drinkers seen here every evening are to be numbered by thousands. Without the gate the sight is peculiarly interesting. On the Meidan some of the best horses in the town are brought out for exercise in the cool of the evening, and their Arab riders enjoy themselves to the utmost, often engaging in sham combats, and giving the freest vent to their exuberant spirits. Horses and riders dash to and fro at full speed, with all the headlong wildness of Arab war. They advance from either side at furious speed, and when it seems as if nothing could avert a collision, they wheel their active horses to right or left, or bring them to a dead stop, and

then, darting away with lightning velocity, circle about, returning upon their enemy, charging again, and pursue, or fly pursued.

These mad gambols are regarded with quiet interest by the coffee-drinkers, who appraise the value of the horses as they are ridden back, after sundown, through the city gates.

The baths of Baghdad are fifty in number, and although for the most part built on a large scale, have no architectural pretensions. The interiors are rendered gloomy, not only by the exclusion of light, which is common in all Turkish baths, but by the use of bitumen as a pavement, which gives a peculiarly funereal appearance to the vaulted tepidarium. They are much frequented by all classes of the community, and are regarded as essential to the enjoyment of good health. The cost to a Baghdadi is only a piastre, about twopence-farthing; to a European it is usually a rupee; but for the European the bitumen is well washed and scrubbed, and an unusual amount of clean linen is placed on his couch when he reclines. His cup of coffee, or, if he prefer it, a warm decoction of nutmeg and ginger, said to be very wholesome, is included in the two shillings which he is called upon to pay. Most of the baths are set apart for the exclusive use of women in the afternoon, and one or two baths are devoted wholly to the service of the sex.

No account of Baghdad would be complete, or even honest, which omitted mention of the Baghdad "date mark," a mysterious malady which affects everybody,

whether citizen or stranger. It is a dry, eating sore, which comes generally upon the face, lasts for a year, and then goes away for ever, leaving an indelible mark about the size and shape of a date, as evidence of the visitation. The cicatrix is just skin deep; the spot appears as if the surface had been seared away with caustic, or a hot iron, and it by no means enhances the beauty of the victim. The sore generally comes in childhood, and then it commonly settles upon the face; the cheek of nearly every man and woman brought up in Baghdad shows the unmistakable mark. Sometimes it settles on the nose, and then the disfigurement is considerable; sometimes on the eyelid, and blindness is generally the result. Strangers are attacked even after a very brief residence; but if they be adults, they get the sore on the arm or wrist. It is more painful there than on the cheek, but, of course, there is no disfigurement. In every case the attack runs its course for a year; no treatment, no ointment or medicine, has the slightest effect upon it. Once the sore makes its appearance, the sufferer knows what to expect, and he may as well resign himself philosophically to all it involves. The Arabs say that every one that goes to Baghdad must get the "date mark;" if he does not get it while in the city, he will get it after he leaves; and, if he does not get it while alive, he will get it after he is dead: it is not to be avoided.

The cause of this peculiar and most disagreeable ailment has not been satisfactorily traced, though many learned theories have been broached upon the subject.

The general impression is that the quality of the water is chargeable with it; but this notion must, I think, be given up. The disease is known in most of the towns from the head of the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, though nowhere is it so rife as in Baghdad. In the town of Mardin it is prevalent, and the water supply of that place comes from the top of the great hill on the side of which it is built. It is very pure water, and that it is not the source of the "date mark" is proved beyond the possibility of doubt by the fact that the inhabitants of a large village at the other side of the hill drink it, and are never attacked by the malady. In Aleppo the disease is known as the "Aleppo button;" and there, as in Baghdad, the favourite theory is that the water is the cause of the evil. But two European physicians who went to the city to investigate the matter were themselves attacked within a fortnight after their arrival in the town, though they took the precaution of having their drinking water brought from a distant place, where its quality was above suspicion. Another suspected cause is a supposed deficiency of iodine in the salt used in the country. Some people are inclined to think that there is something in the defective sanitation of the towns, which predisposes to the attack.

The visitation is not as a rule painful, unless it happens to fix upon a spot above a joint, or a muscle frequently brought into exercise. The irritation occasioned by movement of the affected part is often considerable, and gives rise to a good deal of suffering. The general health is little if at all disturbed in ordinary cases. The

children play about the narrow streets, and make mud pies quite joyously, with great ulcers, the size of a crown-piece, on their little cheeks; it gives them no concern that they are being marked and perhaps disfigured for life, and of pain they feel nothing.

When a little later on I stopped at Mardin, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Dr. Thom, of the American Mission, in that town, and he told me that he had examined the ulcer under a microscope, and found it to be composed of a fungoid growth; but nothing that he had ever tried had been able to arrest or modify its usual course. He had applied diluted nitric acid, without producing more than a temporary effect. An application of iodine was just as inefficacious. He was attacked himself, a large "date mark" forming on his forehead, and apparently eating through the skin to the bone, but nothing that he could think of was of the least use. Other members of the Mission had also been attacked, one young lady having her temple covered by an ulcer that came down to the very angle of the right eye; but all treatment had proved unavailing. The only consolation was that at the end of a year the sore would heal up and never return. The indelible cicatrix must be borne with; for that there is nothing left but the philosophy of resignation.

What the Baghdadis dread more than the date mark is the bite of the scorpion. Scorpions are regarded with peculiar dread, it being said that their bite is mortal. I have heard of children dying from the effects of a bite, and of one woman succumbing, but she was in very

delicate health at the time. In the summer people sleep on the terraces not only to avoid the smothering heat of the rooms, but to be out of the way of the stings of scorpions. These venomous creatures are real plagues, they are everywhere to be found, and particularly in the narrow streets; at night it is necessary to be furnished with a lantern in order to be able to get out of their way. The scorpions of Baghdad are of different kinds and colour—blue, black, and green; the sting of the black scorpion is popularly believed to be deadly, and no remedy for it has been discovered. For the stings of the other species the following remedies are used: (1) A little flat blackish-blue stone is laid upon the wound, and there remains for twenty-four hours, until the poison is extracted. (2) A scorpion is boiled in olive oil, and laid upon the wound: if the same scorpion that caused the wound can be obtained for that purpose the cure is the more certain. (3) A sheep is slaughtered, the inside taken out, and the wounded member placed in the body of the still warm animal. (4) The poison may be sucked out of the wound by a strong man (a process which for him is considered to be by no means unattended with danger). And lastly, the rule must be observed that all applications are put on the wounded part. Remedies must, moreover, be employed immediately after the infliction of the sting, for the effects of the poison are rapid and fearful in their workings.

The people of Baghdad are very superstitious, having the most unquestioning faith in charms, talismans, the evil eye, and maleficent spirits. The Arab children

are decorated with strings of little tin charms not unlike snuff-boxes, each of which contains a verse of the Koran which experience has shown to be effective in warding off the effects of the evil eye. The Jews have a great reputation for the skilful composition of talismans which can protect the bearer, even if he be a Mussulman, from demon-guided bullets in battle. These talismans are generally made by an occult arrangement of letters and words selected from the Hebrew Scriptures and the Talmud. All Baghdad believes that the Jews have an influence with the unseen powers not shared by the people of other races.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRADE OF BAGHDAD.

Depressed condition of trade—Effect of the war—The pilgrim traders—Decline of the trade with Persia—Negotiations for the redress of grievances—Partial revival of the Persian trade during the war—Falling off in the exports of wool—Value of sheep—Grain and other produce—Horses—Exportation prohibited—Loss of the Indian market—The Baghdad custom-house—The large savings of former directors—The subordinate employés—Their small salaries—Attention to their own interests—A reformed custom-house would pay.

THE trade of Baghdad was at a very low ebb when I was in the city, and the depression had been of some duration. The disturbing effects of the war were generally credited with this unsatisfactory state of things, but the differences with Persia which had resulted in the temporary diversion of the stream of pilgrims from that country to the holy cities beyond the Euphrates considerably added to the commercial depression. For nearly all these pilgrims are traders for the occasion, and bring a supply of saleable goods to dispose of in the great trade centres along their route, and on their return, make considerable purchases of the products of the country to sell in the Persian cities. In this way most of them recoup themselves for the expenses entailed by

the long pilgrimage, and many of the most fortunate among them make considerable sums by the pious excursion. This happy combination of commerce and religion is considered quite a matter of course throughout the East; pilgrimages enable vast numbers to make the best of both worlds, and merchants and manufacturers are as much interested in their progress as the devotees who are in charge of the shrines. The vexatious interference by the Turkish authorities with the comfort of the Persian pilgrims some years since was, as I have said in a former chapter, laid hold of by the Government at Teheran as an excuse for prohibiting the usual pilgrimages *viâ* Baghdad to Kerbella and Nejef, and the falling off of the stream was a serious blow to the prosperity of Baghdad. But the stream has begun to flow again, and it is confidently expected that the devout Persians who have been deterred by political complications from visiting the tomb of Hussein, will now make up for lost time, and that their numbers will exceed those of former years.

The decline of the trade with Persia did not escape the notice of the English Consul-General, Colonel Nixon, who some three years ago addressed a letter to the Governor-General of Baghdad, calling his attention to the loss sustained by the commercial community through the grievances of which the pilgrims had complained remaining unredressed. The Governor-General of the time promised that the whole matter should be taken into consideration, and that any abuses found to exist should be remedied. The negotiations with the Persian

by the Sultan's Government have dragged their slow length along for the last couple of years, the Persian Government showing no alacrity in bringing them to a conclusion, for it finds its profit in keeping the great body of the pilgrims within its own frontiers. Meshed is systematically puffed throughout the Persian dominions as being quite on a level in sanctity with Kerbella itself; but this, of course, no true Shiah implicitly believes, and even as it is many thousand pilgrims this year found their way *viâ* Baghdad to the holier shrines in the Sultan's dominions.

The war was not, moreover, an unmixed evil to Baghdad, for the invasion of the Russian territory on the eastern shores of the Black Sea considerably checked the flow of Persian trade by the northern route from Baku to Tiflis and Poti, and also interfered with the supply of piece-goods to the Persian markets from Russian sources. A good deal of the Persian trade was in this way forced back into the old channel, and flowed through the Baghdad custom-house; in this way the depression of the general trade so much complained of was largely mitigated, and the amount received at the custom-house for duty on articles passing through to Persia was so large that the total receipts were double that of previous years.

One of the chief exports of Baghdad used to be rough sheep's wool, but in the year 1876-77 there was a sudden falling-off in the quantity exported amounting to 82,000*l.* sterling; still over 100,000*l.* worth was sent to Europe in that year. The falling-off was due to a sudden

depreciation in the price of wool of that character in the continental markets, owing to large importations of Australian wool which was sold at a reduction of 33 per cent. on the prices which had ruled for years. The first result of this great fall of prices was heavy loss to the Baghdad shippers. The Arabs would not sell their wool a piastre under the prices to which they had been formerly accustomed, and it seemed at one time as if there would be an end to that branch of the trade of the country. But now that the Nomads find that the wool is left altogether on their hands, the merchants universally refusing to buy it at the old figure, they are compelled to submit to a reduction, and the trade will in all probability revive, though it cannot be so remunerative to all parties as it was before.

Mesopotamian wool is principally used in French looms for the manufacture of carpets. The quality varies with the breed of the sheep, and the pastures on which they graze. The wool in most esteem is that of the Beni-Lam and the Montifik tribes, which yields a fine silky fibre, and is of a more elastic quality. From 35 to 40 per cent. is lost in washing and combing, while what is known as Baghdad wool, coming from Hillah, Kerbella, Nejef, Mendeli, and other parts, loses only 25 or 30. The wool is washed on the backs of the animals. Wool from the north is very white and hard, and has a peculiar brilliancy; and the further north, the greater the brilliancy.

When I was returning from Hillah, I inquired the price of a lamb, and was offered one for a rupee. The

price of a sheep, I was told by a shepherd, was six shillings, but the sum was regarded as extortionate by my dragoman. At Baghdad the price is seven shillings for a wether; a ewe is worth from eighteen shillings to a pound. The sheep generally in this part of the country and southward are of the big-tailed variety. It is popularly said that all the fat in their bodies runs into their tails, which often weigh from twenty to thirty pounds. The rest of the animal has little fat to boast of, and the flavour of the mutton, though superior to that of India, is far from being equal to that of England.

Owing to the scarcity of good pasturage during the summer, when much of the grass is burned up, sheep are dearer in Southern Mesopotomia and eastward of the Tigris around Baghdad than further to the north towards Mosul. In the valleys between the Kurdish hills there is abundant pasturage throughout the year, and sheep are more plentiful, and consequently much cheaper there than further south. The difference, I was informed, is usually 15 per cent. There are times when a wether can be bought at Mosul for half-a-crown. A sheep tax is levied amounting to one shilling per sheep per annum, but all sheep under one year are exempt. This tax is often successfully evaded, and the present of a fat wether or two to the tax-collector is generally spoken of as a good investment when evasion happens to be difficult.

Of the vast quantities of grain exported recently from Bussorah and Baghdad I have already spoken, and I have mentioned also that the export from Baghdad was put a

stop to under popular pressure by an order of Government. This trade is capable of unlimited development. Freights to England have hitherto ruled high, but native firms have latterly taken to chartering their own steamers, and the result will be a considerable fall, which will operate as an inducement to growers and exporters.

Gall-nuts and gum are found and gathered in the hills of Sulimaniyeh, Rewandooz, and Kohi Sanjak. The nuts are reputed of better quality than those of Diarbekir and Anatolia, being much darker in colour, and somewhat longer. The gum is found in considerable quantity, but the best quality is very rare, and cannot be found every year. Yellow and red masses are frequently found, and are sent to Bombay and Europe. Madder-root, galbanum, and safflower, now principally brought from Persia, would, it is said, do very well, if the experiment of growing it were tried. The soil of Mesopotamia is capable of producing cotton of the best quality in unlimited quantities, but little is actually grown. No trouble is taken in selecting seed or in cleaning the produce brought to market. The dyers of Baghdad and Hillah have secrets known only to themselves of imparting to the products of their looms beautiful tints of green and blue and other colours, which do not fade. The printed cottons of Manchester are very inferior to them in brilliancy and permanence; but Manchester goods are, owing to their cheapness, in much more general use than the products of home industry. The designs of the goods manufactured in

the cotton capital for this market are often sketched out in Baghdad by native designers and sent over to England to be executed, the native taste being considered of a higher order than that of the Manchester people.

The cotton hitherto exported has been inferior, but there is no doubt that, by proper cultivation, it may be produced of a very superior quality, and in any quantity. Sesame and colza would do well, as experience has shown. Maize thrives admirably. There is a great abundance of mulberry-trees, and experiments tried with silk are reported to have been satisfactory. Rice of very good quality is also produced; and with the view of encouraging the cultivation and manufacture of sugar, his Excellency, Midhat Pasha, with the Porte's sanction, notified in 1870 that sugar-cane seed should pass free of duty. I have described in an earlier chapter the steps now being taken to introduce sugar-cane cultivation from Egypt in the Pachalik of Bussorah.

Horses in Baghdad and the surrounding country are very cheap. An Arab of charger height which would fetch sixty or seventy pounds in Bombay can be bought for ten or twelve pounds. But some years since, the Turkish Government prohibited the exportation in horses, and a lucrative trade was thus put an end to, to the great loss of Arab breeders, and the inconvenience of the Indian market where good horses are now very scarce and dear. It is not easy to understand how it comes to pass that the prohibition has been more than a dead letter, for the Persian frontier can be easily passed, and smuggled horses could be put on board

British steamers at Mohammerah with the greatest ease, while on the Arabian side there is nothing to prevent horses in any number from being ridden to the port of Koweit, and thence sent down the Gulf to supply the Indian markets. Some smuggling does take place, but not to any great extent, and the horses now sent to Bombay from the Persian ports are for the most part "Persians" and not Arabs. Persian horses are more hardy than the noble Arabian breed, and are more capable of travelling over rough country, but they are less docile and have not the easy paces which make the Arab a favourite thoughout the East. It is difficult to understand how in the present day even the Turkish Government can imagine that prohibition of export is necessary to keep up the supply of horses for the home market. In time of war such a measure would be excusable, but as a fixed rule of policy nothing can be more stupid or needless. The supply of good horses will always equal the demand, and the fact that a market such as that of India, was open for the disposal at remunerative prices of the best horses that could be raised, would in itself encourage the breeding of animals fit for the cavalry, which the Turkish Government professes itself anxious to have always well mounted. As a matter of fact the Turkish cavalry has of late years been indifferently mounted, so that the end proposed has not been attained by the old-world device of prohibiting the exportation of horses to foreign markets. The British Government might legitimately impress upon the authorities at Constantinople the advantage

which would accrue to the trade of Turkish Arabia from the removal of this vexatious prohibition. The imposition of a small tax of, say ten shillings or a pound per head, upon each horse exported, would not be felt by the exporter or the Indian purchaser, and would make a very acceptable addition to the scanty revenues now drawn from this portion of the Ottoman dominions.[1]

The Baghdad Custom-House is a wonderful institution, and its ways are peculiar. The European merchant cannot get his goods through without difficulty, even when he pays, as pay he must, the duty leviable according to the tariff. Delays are vexatious, and over-valuation is a matter of course. If he employs an Armenian or a Jewish agent, and does not trouble himself much about details, the difficulties and the delays and the overcharges diminish; and that is found to be the case especially if he be of a liberal disposition, and gives his astute agent *carte blanche* and the run of his purse. The Armenian and Jewish houses fare much better than the European. They have the reputation of being able to pass their goods through the Custom-House very much at their own valuation; being for the most part

[1] There are three kinds of horses in Baghdad: the true Arab, the Persian, and the Kurd. The Bedouins count five noble breeds, descended from the five favourite mares of the Prophet—Tanese, Maneheye, Koheye, Sablaye, and Djulfie. These five principal races diverge into ramifications. Every mare particularly swift and handsome, belonging to any one of the chief races, gives origin to a new breed, the descendants of which are called after her, so that the names of different Arab breeds in the desert are innumerable.

men of high honour, their word is readily taken by the custom-house officials in matters of business.

I have been told of three directors of the Baghdad Custom-House who retired on their means after a short term of office. As their pay was very small, and as they received it very irregularly, it was creditable to their frugality that they could lay by a competency in the course of a couple of years of office. They lived well, and kept up a certain state as became important public functionaries while serving their country. They entertained, I was informed, great pashas in a friendly way, and even at times administered to their personal necessities. How all this could be done out of a salary of some eight or ten pounds a month, which was seldom paid as it fell due, it is not easy to say. The humblest clerks in the establishment seem to get on very well; they find their scanty wages sufficient for all their wants. That they are efficient and inflexible in the discharge of their public duties, no one in Baghdad would care to affirm; but in looking after their own private interests they are very painstaking and sagacious. Were the interests of the State and its creditors the object of equal care, the returns from the Custom-House would, in the opinion of some people, be soon doubled, without any increase in the tariff, or any great development of the present trade. But to secure this desirable result, there must be a very complete change of system. All the custom-house people must be paid higher salaries than they at present nominally get, and they must be paid regularly, so that they may be able to look to their

legitimate earnings as the means of livelihood. That is now scarcely possible with any of the smaller officials throughout Turkey, and the result is the almost universal prevalence of peculation and corruption.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION.

Official corruption—An illustrative case—The State defrauded—The danger of peculation—The employés would prefer salaries regularly paid—Officers not all corrupt—Instances—Good material in Turkey—A properly organized Civil Service needed—Possibility of supplying the want—Foreign specialists—Russian and Prussian examples—The local councils—Drawbacks and advantages—Oppressive war contributions—Assessment of the taxes—Receipts and disbursements of Baghdad—Numerous and vexatious imposts—Plain speaking of the Baghdadis—Democratic ideas of the population—Servants and masters—Christians and Moslems in council—Moral effect of the Russian successes—"Why does not England take the country?"—Doubtful state of public opinion—Weakness of the Government—Danger of anarchy.

Of the many instances illustrative of the prevailing habits of the official class, which were given to me whilst I was in Baghdad, I may mention one. A certain Governor of a District within the Pashalik, kept up a large establishment, his harem being on an extensive scale, seven horses standing in his stable, and his staff of servants being considerable. As his official salary was but fifteen pounds Turkish a month, and he had no private fortune, his friends marvelled much how he could do all this, entertain Arab sheiks in a profuse.

hospitable fashion, and make presents to influential people at Baghdad, without ever appearing to be straitened for want of money. But the Philosopher's Stone which he worked was not at all mysterious to those who were admitted within his immediate circle. He hardly attempted any disguise. An incident which occurred in the presence of one of his intimates, from whom I had the story, showed the whole process at work. A man came in to pay the tax, or rent, for the land which he occupied, or rather to protest that he could not pay it, for he declared that it was too heavy, and more than he ought to be asked to pay. He wanted the amount reduced by one half.

"Reduce your tax by one half!" roared the Governor in a fury. "You scoundrel, you have not been asked to pay half enough; and I will double the amount, and make you pay it *instanter!*"

The man protested that he was assessed beyond the regulation amount, and that he could not pay, and wanted a reduction. The Governor insisted that he had not been called upon to pay enough, and that he was a rascal who wanted to cheat the Government; the dispute seemed to be getting quite serious, when a sign from the Governor's secretary, or confidential man, put the applicant at his ease. He seemed to understand it perfectly, and indeed to have been watching for some signal of the kind. He went over to the secretary, and whispered a word or two. The secretary informed the Governor that the man had a great deal to say about the particulars of his claim for remission, and that it might

save time if he heard the particulars later on when there was more leisure. The Governor said that if the man had anything to say, of course he should be heard, and directed the secretary to ascertain the facts for him, and let him know, so that the decision might be given accordingly. In the result the prayer of the applicant was heard, and the amount of his contribution was cut down to one half, the remitted fifty per cent. being divided between himself and the virtuous Governor. The Government suffered, but who cares for the interest of such an abstraction as the State? As a rule, I am told, it is not the cultivator who suffers from the malpractices of the tax-gatherers so much as the Government, for they can, in most instances, make it worth the collector's while to be considerate. But the State is defrauded wholesale, and almost with impunity. The functionary of whom I have just related an anecdote was dismissed from his office, for his conduct was indiscreet to a degree; but he was not otherwise punished. Being met by the friend who had witnessed the scene above mentioned, he was good naturedly chaffed thereon.

"Well," said he, quite unabashed, "how could I do all that of necessity I had to do—support my harem, keep horses, and show proper hospitality to Arab chiefs—upon fifteen pounds a month which were never paid?"

His friend owned that there was a great deal of common sense in that view of the case.

"Of course," said the ex-functionary, "a man must do what he can. He must live, and if the Government

does not pay him, he must get presents from people to whom he can be of some service. Even when one is paid, it is in depreciated paper; and it is impossible to keep out of debt if a man depends only on what is received from the treasury."

It is very dangerous, however, to be too grasping or greedy in turning an official position to account. There are plenty of people interested in turning out a maladroit functionary, not from any idea of performing a public duty, but from a natural desire to get his berth, and turn the opportunities which he abuses to better account. The interested watchfulness of rivals and enemies is a restraint which, in some measure, atones for the absence of healthy public opinion. From all that I could learn there is little doubt that the Government subordinates would very much prefer adequate salaries, punctually paid, to the dangerous emoluments which now form an almost necessary part of their income. They are in a manner forced to make both ends meet, by taking gratifications or by petty peculation; and and they are, of course, liable to sudden dismissal and irretrievable ruin if they are found out by men who have an interest in supplanting them, and possess influence at head-quarters.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the Turk, who, as a simple citizen, is a straightforward, honest, truthful man, becomes invariably corrupt and shameless when he gets a place in the administration. There are many Turks against whom the tongue of scandal has nothing whatever to allege. Take Midhat Pasha as an example.

After four years of office as Governor-General of the province of Baghdad, during which time he set on foot projects of all kinds, establishing a tramway, developing steam communication on the Tigris, building vast barracks, designing wide streets through the city of Baghdad, he was as poor as when he entered the serai.

He was so poor, that when he was called to Constantinople to be made Vizier, he actually had not sufficient money for the journey to the capital, and had to cast about for the means of raising it as best he could. He employed a confidential agent to endeavour to sell his watch and chain, which were very valuable, to a distinguished native of India, who was to be kept in ignorance of the vendor's name. But the watch was recognized, and the Indian, buying it at the price asked, sent it as a present to Midhat on his departure, and begged him to accept it as a mark of esteem and friendship. The honourable poverty of Midhat Pasha reflects more credit upon him than even the energy with which he forced on so many beneficial public undertakings, by any one of which he might so easily have enriched himself. Another distinguished official who enjoys, and rightly, a character for disinterestedness, not second to that of Midhat Pasha himself, is Ahmed Vefyk Pasha, who, after holding many high administrative appointments, and filling the post of Grand Vizier for a season, lives modestly in a small wooden villa on the Bosphorus—an edifice as unpretentious as the cottage of Cincinnatus—not ashamed of the narrow fortune which attests his inflexible integrity and untarnished honour.

There is fine material in Turkey not only for military but for civil purposes; but the same attention has never been bestowed upon the organization of the civil as upon the military service. If Abdul Aziz, when he re-organized the army and the fleet, and in spite of all difficulties rendered them so efficient and so formidable, had taken the civil service in hand with the same determination, he might have saved the Empire from the shocks which he foresaw, and against which he strove to provide by developing the fighting power of the country. That monarch, before his mind became affected towards the tragic close of his reign, was by no means deficient in sense or energy. He did not, as has been supposed, waste all the money raised in Europe upon palaces and display; he filled the arsenals with the best and most modern weapons, and formed an ironclad fleet second only to that of England. If Russia had been aware of the strength of the army which he organized, it is probable that she would have thought twice, and even three times, before she sent her troops across the Ottoman frontier.

But the internal administration of the Empire was not taken in hand. Nothing was done to improve the rank and file of the civil service, or to train the men for their duties. Whoever could get a place through a powerful patron, or by bribery, was deemed competent to fill it. The traffic in the higher appointments was scandalous, and jobbery and corruption spread everywhere. That is indisputable, but it would be a great error to suppose that all this arose from any ineradicable perversity of

the race. It arose from circumstances, and if the Sultan had seen the absolute necessity of organizing a civil service for the Empire, which would be as good of its kind as his army and his fleet, those circumstances could undoubtedly have been changed. A reasonable fixity of tenure for officials; adequate salaries, regularly paid; promotion by seniority, except where incompetency had to be punished or exceptional qualities rewarded; and the strict enforcement of the law in cases of bribery or peculation, would have changed the whole tone of the official class in a few years. Will any one say that a strong-willed Sultan, or a capable Vizier, could not have effected this, or that it could not even now be effected by the simple resolve that it should be done? For a time, no doubt, the services of foreign experts would be, perhaps, indispensable to give the requisite impulse to the new machinery, and make it work; but there are many Turks of European training who could be turned to account in Europeanizing the bureaucratic system, and adapting it to the imperative requirements of the age.

What is really wanted to regenerate the service is a strong impulse from above or from without. All else will follow as a matter of course, for there is good material at hand, native as well as foreign, to carry out any system of reform that may be decided upon, however complicated or complete. There is nothing in the employment of foreign specialists which need wound the self-love of the most sensitive Ottoman, for he has been familiarized with the principle in the army and the navy,

neither of which has ceased to be Turkish, though the reorganization of both has been largely the work of imported talent. As every one knows, Peter the Great regenerated Russia with the counsel and assistance of Swiss and Scottish and German adventurers. Frederick the Great employed French financiers to administer the fiscal system of the Prussian monarchy. Turkey may be expected to follow without too much repugnance examples so illustrious, if the advisability of doing so be steadily impressed upon her by the one Power which alone has an interest in saving the remains of the Empire from becoming the prey of her insatiable neighbour.

In Baghdad, as in the chief town of every vilayet, there is a council, or medjliss, to assist the Pasha in the Government. This body is partly composed of Christians and Jews, but the Mussulmans are in a majority of nearly two to one. The non-official members are elected by their co-religionists. The council has judicial as well as consultative functions, and it hears appeals from the councils of the sandjaks and muderliks—counties and townlands—into which the province is divided. In each sandjak the Lieutenant-Governor, or Kaimacam, has also his council, in part elective; and in each kaza or mudirlik the mudir has also his little vestry to assist or to thwart him. The mudir is himself supposed to be nominated by the Governor-General in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, who make known their views by a memorial recommending him. Nothing could be more liberal, or indeed democratic, in theory

than this organization, and sometimes it works remarkably well. But it is found in practice to work well only when the Pasha is himself a good administrator and an enlightened man, and then it is doubtful whether things would not be better done if there were no medjliss to consult and to humour. When the Pasha is a man of another stamp, he can always procure the sanction of the council for his most objectionable acts. The council acts as a screen behind which he can divest himself of direct responsibility.

Another inconvenience which I was told resulted from the institution of the provincial and the local councils, was this, that it increased the area of corruption, and the number to be corrupted. In the good old days when the Pasha exercised uncontrolled despotic authority, all that was necessary was to bribe either himself or some one who possessed undoubted influence over him; and subordinates, as a rule, might be disregarded. The Pasha would take care that whatever he decided upon should be done; his fiat was all-sufficient. But with the medjliss matters are different. It is necessary to make friends with several of the more influential members, or the decision of that body may be influenced by a rival, or delayed from sheer apathy. When the decision is given, the Pasha may or may not get it promptly carried into effect. Subordinates may prove inert unless their zeal be stimulated. The consequence is that it is now necessary to have a longer purse than before, so that difficulties may be overcome, and friction reduced by the simple process of bribing all round. This

is the account of the working of the local government by council, which was given to me by sundry people in Baghdad, and later on, in other provincial chief towns. There is no doubt a good deal of truth in the complaints one hears throughout Turkey upon these and similar subjects, but grumblers are prone to exaggerate, and we need not take all that they say as absolute gospel.

It is not to be wondered at if institutions with a popular element in them are not always perfect in their working in a country where an enlightened public opinion has yet to be created, and the newspaper is unknown, except in a few of the more advanced towns. There is a small news-sheet, in Arabic, published by the Government in Baghdad, but it has no circulation and no influence. Even if it had both, a government organ, printed in a government office, would be too well-mannered to point out the shortcomings and backslidings of medjliss or Pasha. But the mere fact that Mussulman, Christian, and Jew sit together in council to discuss local questions, and decide thereon, cannot fail to have a beneficial influence in softening the jealousies arising out of differences of race and religion. The effect upon the younger generation especially must be considerable, tempering Mussulman arrogance, and giving self-respect and confidence to Jew and Christian. The sense of political and social superiority on the one side, and of humiliation on the other, will be gradually effaced by a habit of co-operation in the work of local government.

The practice of farming out the taxes has been

abandoned in the Pashalik of Baghdad. The collection is now made by government officials; and from all I could hear it is the Government itself that suffers most by the irregularities of its agents. Until the outbreak of the Servian war led to the imposition of war contributions—which were aggravated almost past endurance as the progress of the subsequent struggle with Russia strained every fibre of the Empire to breaking point—the taxes were not heavy; at least, all the complaints which were made upon the subject of the exactions of the Government had reference only to the war contributions. These were very burdensome, and pressed with painful severity on the poor.

According to some stories of hardship and oppression which were told to me during my stay, the tax collectors appear to have arrogated to themselves the right to enhance the amount of the assessment on the spur of the moment, according to their own good will and pleasure, by way of punishing the unwilling or rectifying errors in the original demand. I was told of one tax-collector who called at the house of a man, far from rich, and demanded a medjidie, or four shillings, as a war contribution. The man's wife, representing him in his absence, declared that the family was living on barley, instead of wheat flour, and that they could not pay a medjidie; and she added, quite frankly, her private opinion of the Government, and its representative—the tax-collector. The latter, to show that authority was not to be insulted, then and there raised his demand to four medjidies; and announced to the irate wife that if

the sixteen shillings were not paid without delay, her husband would be put in gaol, and her household goods, such as they were, seized and sold. As there was not a piastre in the house, this declaration boded ruin to the family. The good man's abba, or Arab cloak, was therefore spread out on the floor, and the neighbours were asked to throw into it what they could spare, so as to avert the threatened disaster. Everybody threw in a coin—Christians as well as Mussulmans—and the four medjidies were made up and paid to the terrible tax-collector.

I had these particulars from a man who knew the family concerned, and was personally aware of what had taken place. It is evident that the tax-collector is regarded as an irresponsible functionary, against whose decrees there is no appeal; and that he is by no means unwilling to confirm the popular impression by the high-handedness of his proceedings. It is not very unwarrantable to believe that where such notions prevail, the collection of the taxes is often highly remunerative to the collector, and as often oppressive to the unfortunate taxpayer.

The system of assessing the amount of the land-tax according to an arbitrary estimate of the nature of the growing crops, is especially fertile in abuses. Unless the collector, who is generally the assessor, be made reasonable by means of presents, he has it in his power to set what value he pleases upon the wheat or barley in a field, and insist upon a third, or a tenth of that value, being paid to the Government; or, at all events, to him-

self, which is not precisely the same thing. There is practically no redress in cases of over assessment. Even the mere postponement of the valuation for a week or two, under some plausible excuse of want of time, may inflict heavy loss upon the luckless cultivator who does not stand well with the tax-gatherer, for the crops must not be cut until they are valued, and the delay in cutting may ruin the harvest. The obvious remedy for abuses of this kind is the abolition of the most objectionable and clumsy system of estimating the amount of the land-tax by the quantity of the produce grown each season, and substituting for it a fixed sum, payable in cash or in its equivalent of marketable produce, proportioned to the quantity of land in cultivation. A complete reform of the method of assessing and collecting the revenue from the land would soon bring a most welcome increase to the scanty resources of the Government, and lighten the pressure upon the cultivators, who would know exactly what they were legally bound to pay, and could make their arrangements accordingly, free from harassing uncertainty, and from the dread of exactions which can only be averted, as things now stand, by propitiating the tax-gatherer with gifts, given without grace, and accepted without gratitude.

By the returns of the receipts and disbursements of the vilayets of Baghdad and Bussorah, for 1874—the most recent available [1]— it appears that the tithes and taxes yield in ordinary times 648,435 pounds Turkish,

[1] See Appendix D. IV.

and the customs, which are a separate and imperial department, 150,000*l.* During the last year there has been a great falling off in all the ordinary branches of the revenue except one, owing to the depression in trade consequent on the war. But singularly enough the customs' returns have been just doubled, being estimated at 300,000*l.* There has been, doubtless, greater vigilance and honesty in the collection of this branch of the revenue; the urgent necessity of getting in money from every available source acting as a spur on all concerned. Besides, as I have previously stated, the Persian trade has partially revived owing to the insecurity of part of the Russian territory during one period of the war, and the goods for the Shah's dominions pay tribute when passing through the Baghdad Custom-House.

The list of articles on which taxes are levied[2] is wonderfully long. Nothing escapes the attention of the tax-collector, and though the amount demanded is seldom considerable in itself, the perpetual recurrence of demands must be vexatious to the people, and out of all proportion to the gain to the revenue. There is even a tax on hides used for drawing water from the river; a tax on the roasting of coffee for the coffee-houses; a tax on mills for grinding corn; a tax on the weighing of corn; a tax on salt; a tax on wood for fuel; excise duties on divers manufactures; octroi duties of ten per cent. *ad valorem* on wheat and barley, on vegetables, fresh fruit, melons, cheese, and milk. As a matter of course, oxen, buffaloes, camels, and sheep are taxed, and

[2] Appendix, D. III.

a tax has to be paid when they are slaughtered. Two and a half per cent. must be paid to the Government on the sale of landed property, and of horses and baggage cattle. The weighing of silk is a government monopoly. Fees must be paid on government contracts and private contracts, and a licence-tax is necessary for the erection and even the repair of buildings.

Besides the excise duties, a stamp is requisite for articles of local manufacture of every description, amounting to two and a half per cent. on the value. Added to all these, and many other imposts of the same kind, there is a poll-tax. The bridges over the rivers also yield a revenue to the Government. The tolls are by no means light, considering the poverty of the country, and all animals and all goods have to pay; nothing seems to go free but foot-passengers. Even corpses are specified in the list of tolls, a sum of about threepence being levied on them. This is, no doubt, a device for drawing money from the pockets of the pilgrims from Persia, who all, as a rule, bring a corpse or two with them for interment at Kerbella. As there are at least three pontoon bridges on the route, which must be traversed, the Turkish Administration realizes ninepence on every body going to its last home in the sacred soil of Meshed Hussein.

The expenditure on the administration of Turkish Arabia is ordinarily little under 300,000 pounds Turkish per annum; a sum which cannot be regarded as by any means excessive. Only one thousand pounds of that sum is laid out on education, but as the endowments

devoted to educational purposes are not inconsiderable, the Government may not think itself called upon to do more in that direction. The Province remits to Constantinople a surplus of about 450,000*l.*, a respectable sum in itself; but taking into consideration the vast extent of the country, its natural resources—intersected and fertilized by two great rivers,—and its geographical situation, so favourable for commerce, a net revenue of less than half a million sterling per annum is miserably short of what might be reasonably expected. It is not easy to see why Turkish Arabia should not be made to yield a revenue larger than that of Egypt, and that, too, without undue pressure on the population. The construction of one or two railways, a few roads, the reopening and utilization of canals already existing, the establishment of an efficient mounted police, and the building of fifty or sixty guard-houses along the great trade routes, would transform not only the whole Mesopotamian valley, but the entire aspect of Turkish finance.

Judging from the readiness with which every one I meet, who is not himself connected with the administration, discourses of the faults and failings of the Government, it is quite clear that the community generally is quite alive to existing evils, and is fast becoming ripe for a great social and political advance upon the present state of things. People do not complain of the tyranny of the Government; its laxity and inefficiency, and the inertness and venality of the subordinate officials are the most frequent topics when grumbling begins. The

freedom with which they speak their mind and give their opinions upon the powers that be, strikes one as being almost British in its thoroughness. There is a degree of plain speaking in this country to which one is not accustomed in India, where reticence and a graceful diplomacy veil a great deal which one would like to know.

I asked a European gentleman of considerable experience of Asiatic Turkey for an explanation of this phenomenon; and he replied: "There is something decidedly democratic in the ideas and habits of people in this part of the world. They are, perhaps, more really democratic in some of their ways than even the Americans themselves. You will find that if you want to hire a servant; he will negotiate with you on equal terms, and he will make inquiries about your character and your behaviour to former servants, just as elsewhere the master inquires about the character and antecedents of a man he is going to take into his service."

"Well," said I, "that reminds me that the dragoman, Yusef, when I engaged him to come with me to the country beyond the Euphrates, said that he would not agree to go with me further than Nejef; but that 'if he liked me and I liked him,' from what we saw of each other on the shorter journey, he would go with me to Constantinople afterwards. That struck me as an original way of putting the matter."

"No doubt it seemed to you strange; but if you had been as long in this country as I have been, you would have regarded it as a matter of course that the person

you were about to employ should take you at first upon trial. Every servant does so; and after all it seems a reasonable thing to do the moment we remember that there is no reason, in the nature of things, why one man should be the master and the other the servant; the accident which decides which is to be the one and which the other, is simply that one happens to be at the moment a little better off than the other. The happiness and peace of mind of the servant is quite at the mercy of the master, while the master is by no means so dependent on the good qualities of his servant for the happiness of his life. The man of position and means has many compensations if the servant is not quite all that can be desired; but a master who is bad-tempered, or a screw, can make his servant's life a burden to him. These things are not understood out of the servants' hall in Europe, but in Turkey, somehow, we all understand them, and accept in entire good faith the axiom that Jack is as good as his master. It adds much to his happiness, and saves us a world of trouble. The confidential servant here is the prime minister of the head of the house, and takes all worry off his hands. He holds the purse, and makes all payments, and nearly all the purchases; he prevents his master from being over-reached, and advises him in all matters needing counsel; he sees that persons who come to pay their respects to the great man take off their slippers on being ushered into the presence, placing the lowly in the position which etiquette prescribes; he directs the coffee and the sherbet, and the cigarettes to be got ready when

visitors are seen in the offing; he is generally the factotum of the house, and sees that it comes to no detriment while his master is taking the world very much at his ease; he is, in fact, one of the family for the time being, actually taking precedence even of the eldest son, and is generally much more completely in the confidence of the heir apparent's papa than the young gentleman himself. Nobody is shocked at this, for we start with a devout conviction that all men are equal in the sight of God. The democratic principles of the Koran have an acceptance here, which those of '89 have not yet received in France or anywhere else in the Western world."

"And does this system work satisfactorily? Are these prime-minister servants more honest or more incorruptible than, say, subordinate government officials?"

"Yes; they are, on the whole, very faithful to their master, and look upon his interests as identified with their own. They have a principle of honour which obliges them to do this. But they regard themselves as entitled to entertain their friends in an unpretending fashion, and generally to treat what is his as for the time their own, in a way that the ignorant European might regard as improper. But it all comes right in the end. They administer the affairs of the house more economically than the master himself could if he tried."

"Are they paid highly for the trouble they take in ruling a man's household for him?"

"The wages of domestics in this country are about double what they are in Western India. You cannot

get a decent servant under two or three pounds a month, unless you are a person of some position, and receive many visitors; then a servant will come to you for nothing. The backsheesh from the visitors will remunerate him better than any wages he could in conscience ask."

"How do they perform the ordinary duties of servants? Are they, as a rule, well trained?"

"They are not equal to Indian servants in household work. They are not so patient and handy. It is almost impossible to get a good cook. Of course, except in the harem—in the women's apartments—all work is done by men-servants. A maid-of-all-work is unknown in Turkey, and the men are not specially trained for household work. But they are much more intelligent than the servants in India. They understand as well as yourself whatever has to be discussed or decided on, and they deliver a message and bring back the right answer in a way that the Hindu servant is never expected to do. That saves the perpetual writing of 'chits,' notes about nothing, which adds so much to the miseries of life in India. In this country people are not brought up to do one particular little duty well, and to let their brains lie fallow for all besides. The confidential man of a Pasha takes his turn at affairs of State, and is shrewd enough in advising thereon, and above all, in sifting applicants for place or favour."

"I have heard," I said, "that both master and man find their account in that. Backsheesh may be paid to the man without compromising his master to any great extent, and both sometimes grow rich in that way."

"Yes," replied my experienced interlocutor; "the arrangement is one in great favour with many officials. It saves them a world of trouble, and diminishes the risk of being found out in shady transactions. But the confidential men who find themselves indispensable to officials in that sort of way, soon become mere rapacious rogues. They cheat their masters, and fleece everybody who approaches them. No sensible applicant objects to give them backsheesh in reason; but their appetite for illicit gain grows by what it feeds on, and the nuisance becomes intolerable. Then there is sure to be a scandal, the whole thing is talked about, and somebody or another is dismissed, very possibly a small official not half as bad as others who are more wide-awake."

"It would appear, then," I ventured to remark, "that the democratic spirit which pervades the community generally is not sufficiently strong to make men in office think more of the public interest than of their own?"

"The democratic spirit has not that miraculous effect always in America if all that we hear be true, although in that country there is a free press and a strong and even tyrannical public opinion. But the democratic principle is very strong in America for all that, and it is strong here, too. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the population of this country would blindly acquiesce in anything which was not roughly in accord with their notions of what was fair and right. They have no idea of that entire, absolute, and passive obedience which the Russians have been in the habit of

considering the whole expression of the relations between governed and government. Among themselves they canvass every official act with the greatest freedom, for there is no organized espionage to make them afraid. The Turks have no Siberia. Of course they keep their opinions more to themselves when officials are present; but there is often a degree of candour, even to them, which would surprise you. In the Turkish Parliament the members, both Christian and Mussulman, spoke out boldly enough; they were not in the least mealy-mouthed. That was a surprise to European politicians, who knew nothing of the habits of the people of this country or of their turn of thought. But it surprised no one who had been long resident amongst them. The Turks are much more fitted for parliamentary institutions than many nations which flatter themselves that they are much further advanced in civilization. One reason for this is, that there has been always a large measure of local self-government throughout the Empire. The different communities governed themselves very much according to their own notions, and there was a great deal of give and take between them and the State officials. The system had, undoubtedly, its drawbacks; it prevented the Empire from becoming, in any degree, homogeneous; but it accustomed officials and people alike to a habit of talking over matters and effecting compromises; or, at all events, trying to do so, and that is by no means a bad training for parliamentary government. The medjliss, or council, which exists in every province, arrondissement, and canton, also ac-

customs them to talk over public business, and to bear in mind that there is something to be said on both sides in every question."

"I have heard it alleged that the Christian and the Hebrew members of the medjliss are rather worse than Turks, and that their presence in the council-chamber is of no advantage at all to their own communities, for they think only of turning the position to their own profit by currying favour with the officials."

"That is what is said with more or less truth by Christians and Hebrews who are not themselves in the medjliss; but we must make allowances in these things. No doubt, the non-official members are often wanting in public spirit, but the mere fact of their presence is in itself a restraining and wholesome influence on the dominant class."

I found that this view of the matter was by no means so fanciful or exaggerated as I at first was inclined to think. My subsequent observations confirmed its general accuracy to an extent which I did not expect. I personally became acquainted with circumstances which showed, conclusively, that there is a very large measure of self-government in the remoter provinces of the Empire, and that the presence of Christian and Jewish members in the local councils, is far indeed from being a mere mockery of representation. I know of a case in which a liberal-minded Governor, very unpopular with the majority of the Mussulman section on account of his entire freedom from old-fashioned prejudices, relied almost entirely upon the support of the

Christian and Jewish members to get a working majority, and carry on business. I have seen his letters to at least one of the Christian councillors—a clergyman—asking him to be sure to come, as his vote would be of great use. In another governorship the remonstrances of a Bishop in regard to some matter of local importance being disregarded, he declared that he never would go to the medjliss again. Abundant civilities were employed to get him to alter his determination, and promises were made that his views should be duly attended to in future.

Of course, the Mussulmans, being always in a majority, can have their own way whenever they like. But every question that arises is not simply one between the Mussulman and the Unbeliever: there are complex questions on which the majority cannot readily agree; then the Christian or the Jew, or both combined, can turn the scale in favour of the Pasha, or the Moulla, or the Kadi, as the case may be. The result of it all is that the Unbeliever is no longer a mere dog of an infidel; he is a man whose religious convictions may be more or less mistaken, but who is nevertheless a fellow-citizen whose support or opposition should be taken into account. It can hardly be said that all this is not some compensation for the shortcomings of the institution of the medjliss, of which we hear so much from professional grumblers.

In the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies the strong democratic leaven which exists throughout the Empire, underlying the despotic and bureaucratic aspects of the

administration, made itself evident in many unexpected forms. The members expressed themselves with great boldness and criticized abuses as if they had been accustomed to discuss public affairs all their lives, which in truth they had, though not in parliament assembled. The Christian representatives were by no means the most ardent or thoroughgoing reformers; their Mussulman colleagues were much more radical. The honourable member for Baghdad was so pronounced in his views that he was regarded with some distrust by the Court party; the members for Beyrout, for Broussa, and for Smyrna, were also distinguished by their zeal for a reform of the administration.

The leading idea of this section of the Mussulman left was that the hierarchy of the administration should be reconstructed, the elective system being applied wherever practicable, as it is already applied in the selection of mudirs for the approval of the Governor-Generals. The moukhtars or mayors of the villages are elected by the inhabitants, who have the complete control of their own affairs; the mudirs are virtually elected by the inhabitants of each district, for the names of the persons proposed for the office are sent up to the Governor-Generals for ratification. Extend this system, say the more advanced reformers, and the evils which now result from the appointment at Constantinople of officials whose chief qualification for preferment in the provinces is that they possess influence in the capital, will at once come to an end.

It is quite possible that so drastic a measure as this

might dangerously weaken the authority of the supreme government, and thus render the Empire a prey to other and even greater evils than those which it would remedy: but the fact that a measure so decidedly democratic in form and tendency should be desired by Mussulman representatives from the more remote Asiatic provinces of the Empire is of considerable interest. The experiment of a Turkish Parliament was by no means absurd in itself, though it appeared so to Europeans who had no means of becoming acquainted with the real tendency of things in the Ottoman Empire, and knew nothing of the existence of a certain measure of self-government in all its provinces. If it be true, as every one who knows the country and the different races which make up its population from long residence in the Sultan's dominions will certify, that the lower and middle class Turks are honest, well-intentioned, laborious people forming the backbone of the Empire, a representative system which will bring a certain number of them together with a proportion of Christians as well as of Kurds and Arabs annually to Constantinople, to sit in judgment upon the official classes and insist upon the reform of abuses, could not fail to have a beneficial influence. It will be a great misfortune for Turkey if the jealousy of Russia and the incredulity of the other Powers prevent the experiment begun at a moment so little propitious, from having a fair trial.

While in Baghdad, I made it my business to inquire whether any Russian intrigues were supposed to be on foot in that part of the Ottoman Empire. The answer

was always in the negative. Baghdad is, perhaps, too far from the centres of Russian influence to make it worth while to employ agents there to stir up disaffection.

But the successes of Russia at the close of the war made a profound impression on both Mussulman and Christian; an apprehension of the impending ruin of the Ottoman Power appeared to be in the minds of all with whom I conversed. No one expressed any desire for the advent of Russian sway; but men of old Baghdadi families, Mussulmans in religion, and Arabs and Christians, seemed to think that the days of the Sultan's rule were numbered, and that his independence was already a thing of the past. It was very generally believed that the Sultan would be forced by Russia to aid her in a war against England, and that he would in future have to do whatever he was ordered by his conqueror.

I was more than once asked confidentially by good Mohammedans why England did not come and take possession of the country, and keep it from the Russians? Everybody, I was told, would be glad of the change, for the conscription and the war-taxes had made the people very discontented. If England, they said, took over the country, it would soon prosper; trade would increase at once; and there would be no conscription. I found that the splendour and civilization of Bombay filled a large place in the popular imagination in Baghdad; and that the trade, and prosperity, and fine buildings of that city were attributed to the fact that the port

of India was under British rule. The Arabs who visit Bombay every year for purposes of trade are by no means few, and on their return they give glowing accounts of its wealth and magnificence, which far exceed, it must be allowed, anything to be seen in the Baghdad of this degenerate age. To exchange the yoke of the Sultan for that of the British would not be regarded by the Arab-speaking population of this region as a misfortune, but rather the reverse; and it is the opinion of men who have had abundant opportunities of forming a correct judgment, that no one, not actually an official or a soldier, would raise a finger to prevent such a consummation. But it is quite another question whether, the exchange once made, the nomadic Arab population would long willingly submit to be ruled by Kaffirs, especially when acted upon from without by accomplished intriguers. A British annexation of the country, were such a thing politically possible or desirable, could only be made permanent by a tedious war. But our ambition does not lie that way; aggrandizement in that part of the world would be the last thing to suggest itself to any English statesman. On that very account I was the more struck with the number of the inquiries which were made as to the possibility of the country being brought some day under British rule. The deduction is two-fold; that the population has in one way or another acquired a conviction of the mildness and justice which characterize our sway, and that public opinion is gradually preparing the way for great changes. The Ottoman Government will find

its account in itself effecting the changes which will satisfy the growing needs of its Asiatic subjects; a complete and searching reform of the system of administration cannot be safely delayed for a single year. In leaving Mesopotamia and Kurdistan without an adequate police, and so completely denuded of troops as has been the case since the war, a serious mistake has been committed, which has resulted in diffusing amongst the population an idea of the weakness and instability of the Government that may at any moment lead to the temporary collapse of the Sultan's authority and general anarchy.

CHAPTER XVII.

OUTSIDE BAGHDAD.

Sanatarium outside the city—A row of houses—The white ass—How Baghdad ladies ride—Dinner at the tents—Mussulman guests—The Baghdad police—Summary proceedings—Imprisonment—How Persian officials oblige their friends—Inquiries about India—Would Indian Mussulmans fight for religion?—Supposed Russo-Turkish alliance—Danger of going through the country to the north—Alternative routes—The Damascus route—Experiences of an Englishman on that route—The Euphrates route—The route *vid* Kermansha—Perils of the road—Travelling by day safer than by night—An Arab concert and dance.

On the 20th of April I left Baghdad for a little sanatarium, three miles south of the city, where Dr. Colvill had set up a small encampment on the borders of the cultivated ground, so as to have the benefit of the fresh pure air coming direct off the salubrious desert. Some well-to-do citizens had also moved out to the same neighbourhood, by way of change, and their tents were pitched a quarter of a mile from the learned doctor's. The latter had taken the precaution to employ as caretaker and general-utility-man a certain Arab sheik, who was generally understood to be the most formidable horse-stealer and bandit in the vicinity, so that his horses, and his household goods, and his person were as

safe as human foresight could render them. The sheik's people were encamped in a position which made access from the side of the desert difficult, and very dangerous for dishonest interlopers; a bend in the Tigris forming an efficient protection on the other side. There was, therefore, something like complete security, though on the perilous edge of the desert.

The doctor's horses, some half a dozen in number, were made fast to a row of pegs driven into the ground in front of the tent. They had no shelter, and stood exposed to the blazing sun of noon, and to the dews of night, without suffering in either health or spirits. They were nearly all Arabs, and had been accustomed to the vicissitudes of out-of-door life from the time they were foaled. The Persian horses are even better able to stand exposure and the rough usage of the world than the Arab steeds. The idea of housing either never occurs to anybody in these parts.

Amongst the horses stood a beautiful white ass, of considerable height and finely proportioned, fit for a prince to ride. It was worth twenty or twenty-five pounds—a sum which would buy a very good horse indeed anywhere in Turkish Arabia. A Baghdadi, who dropped in to pay a visit, complimented his host upon the possession of so fine an animal, and said banteringly that "it was the finest horse in his stable!" In the narrow streets and thronged bazaars of eastern towns, a well-formed stately white ass is much more imposing, as well as convenient, when riding about to pay ceremonious visits, than an unwieldly unmanageable horse, which

cannot easily find room to get along without coming into collision with the shopkeepers' stalls, or the porters' burdens, to the great disturbance of the equanimity of all concerned. The donkeys selected for the use of the upper ten in the East have not only their white silky coats and their shapely forms to recommend them, they are of great size, being equal in bulk and weight to any three of their degraded brethren who drag out a miserable existence in a London costermonger's barrow. They have besides a good deal of spirit, and a certain turn of speed. When we see them, gaily caparisoned, carrying a dignified personage in safety and comfort, above the dirt and dogs of the bazaar, and well beneath the various dangers from projections overhead which are so formidable to aspiring horsemen, we cease to wonder why they are more prized, or at all events higher priced than any ordinary Arab steed.

This particular donkey, standing in line with the other quadrupeds in front of the tent, was kept for ornament rather than use; his proprietor having the European prejudice against donkey-riding anywhere except at the seaside. But it was made useful for once soon after my arrival. We had come down the river from Baghdad on board H.M.S. Comet, which was proceeding to Bussorah, and an Armenian lady, the wife of one of the officers, came so far on the voyage to speed her husband on his way. She came on shore with the doctor and myself, and she proposed to ride back to Baghdad on the donkey, rather than on any of the horses. A gorgeous Turkish saddle—not a side-saddle

—resplendent in red and gold, was placed upon its plump white back: the Armenian dame, being unprovided with a habit, very sensibly rode, as she said, "like an Arab woman," *en Amazone;* and accompanied by a couple of stout grooms, set out for the city at a brisk pace, so as to arrive within the gates before the shades of evening gave the signal for the children of evil to come forth in search of spoil. It must not be supposed that it is the Arab woman alone who rides *en Amazone* in these parts—Turks, Jewesses, and Christians do so habitually. Side-saddles are unknown, except in the case of the half-Europeanized wives of Europeans, and all they gain by abandoning the usual mode of riding is a greater facility in falling off their steeds. I have seen some Turkish ladies on saddles so capacious that they sat or rather squatted as on a divan, having their yellow-booted feet crossed in front in the most comfortable manner. It need not be said that the fair infidels neither trotted nor cantered while in this home-like attitude; an attendant at the horse's head took care that the animal never went faster than a walk.

Dinner at the tents was enlivened by the presence of Mussulman gentlemen from the neighbouring encampment. One of them was President of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce; another was a judge. They were very intelligent, sensible men, and gave me a good deal of interesting information about local matters—legal, commercial, and political. I was much struck with an account of the energy of the Baghdad Chief of Police, and the simplicity and directness with which he

brought guilt home to the suspected. The very day previous this vigorous functionary heard of a great robbery of gold and silver ornaments, and he at once rode over to a sort of farmstead, not far from the angle of the river where the little camp in which we then were was situated. The peaceful occupant of the farmstead was, of course, a farmer; and he was naturally very indignant when he was accused of having stolen the missing property. He denied the impeachment, and he persisted in his denial even when told that his doing so would entail a sound flogging, administered on the spot. When accusations and protestations were at their height, the vigilant eye of the chief of police caught sight of an Arab woman, one of the employés about the establishment, walking down towards the river. He sent a policeman to bring her back. She let a piece of jewellery fall; and when she was divested of her solitary garment, a good deal more was found. The unhappy farmer maintained that if the woman, or her belongings, had stolen the things, that was nothing to him; he knew nothing of the robbery, and could not be held accountable for it. The chief of police was not to be deceived by such plausible pleading; he had the man thrown down and flogged severely, saying, that as his people committed the robbery, he very possibly knew all about it; and it would do no harm to punish him whether he did or not: if he did not know of their dishonesty, he ought to have known of it. The woman, and her immediate belongings, were dragged off to prison.

To be imprisoned for a longer or shorter term is a trifle in Baghdad when a good-natured, easy-going Pasha is in power; for it is a common thing for a person in good society to ask his Excellency to arrest and keep under lock and key a servant, or dependent, or a low fellow who may have given offence: and it would be considered quite uncourteous to refuse such a request; the Pasha who did so would be regarded as little better than a disobliging curmudgeon. When Kadree Pasha visited the prison in person a few days after I happened to arrive in Baghdad, he released one hundred and fifty of the inmates, for whose detention no cause could be assigned. They had been locked up without charge or warrant, simply to oblige their betters, to whom they had in some way given offence. Kadree Pasha is understood to have a western prejudice against this primitive system.

In Persia, I am told, any one of position who is on friendly terms with a public functionary of any rank, can get whom he pleases arrested and punished as he may think fit. The obliging Governor will ask what you wish to have done to the rascal? and if you be of a merciful turn, you had better say at once that you wish him to be simply bastinadoed; otherwise, he may be very severely punished indeed, so that you may have no reason to fancy your official friend lukewarm or indifferent to your supposed wishes. Things are not quite so bad in Turkey; but even there, the idea of a Habeas Corpus Act has not yet germinated in the public mind.

My Mussulman friends made many inquiries about

India, and appeared very anxious to hear about the numbers and the status of their co-religionists in that country. What did they think about the war, and the doings of the Russians? Would they fight for Religion if the British Government would let them? A day or two before the telegraph had brought the news that a portion of the Native Army was to be sent from Bombay to Europe, no doubt with a view to possible hostilities with Russia. This, it was easy to see, rekindled hopes which had almost expired; but the general impression seemed to be that it was now doubtful whether even England could undo what had been done. Why did England let Russia get so far? Could the Indian troops fight Russian troops? Could they stand cold? Were they physically strong men? Were they Nizams—regulars? What was the number of the English Army? These questions showed that the conditions of the military problem were very well understood. In almost every town I subsequently visited on my way to the Mediterranean I had to stand a similar fire of interrogatories. The overwhelming events of the war had opened people's eyes to the danger of taking anything upon trust; they were inclined to be sceptical about the reality of strength which had not stood the ordeal of actual battle: and the conversation generally came round to this point, that it was to be devoutly hoped that if the war were renewed, England should prevail over Russia; but that Turkey would "for a time" remain neutral, if Russia had not compelled the Sultan to enter into a defensive and offensive alliance

with her. This was believed by everybody to be the case, but it was also the belief that the said defensive and offensive alliance would last only so long as Russia was strong enough to enforce it, and no longer.

The supposed existence of this Russo-Turkish alliance was considered by my friends in Baghdad good ground for me to reconsider my determination to travel through the country to Alexandretta, or overland to Constantinople. Both Europeans and Moslems shook their heads, and said that of a certainty I should be sent back from Mosul, or from Diarbekir, if allowed to get so far. The prospect of being forced to retrace my steps to Baghdad did not, however, weigh upon my spirits much, for I had been already told by a cheerful Indian official at Kurrachee, that before I got half way I should be shot as an English spy. In comparison with this fate, being merely ordered to fall back upon the "Abode of Peace" would be an agreeable incident of travel.

I made inquiries, however, with regard to the alternative routes, of which there were two. There was the route, almost due west, across the Syrian Desert to Damascus, and thence by French diligence, along a very good road, to Beyrout; and there was the route up the Euphrates. The time occupied by the former would be only a fortnight, and the expense would be comparatively trifling. It would be necessary to buy a camel for eight or ten pounds, and take provisions for the greater part of the way to Damascus. This is the route generally preferred by Europeans returning from Baghdad, for it is the least fatiguing and the shortest. It is also

believed to be the safest; the Arabs wandering over that part of the desert generally have business relations with either Baghdad or Damascus, and are, therefore, unwilling to commit outrages which might get them into trouble when they come into either city to buy or sell.

But the immunity from attack by the Arabs is by no means complete. A week before I reached Baghdad, a young Englishman who was very desirous of making the journey by *chuppur*, or post, *viâ* Mosul and Diarbekir to Alexandretta, gave up the project, as that journey was considered too dangerous to be made alone, and he decided to cross the Syrian Desert, which was supposed to be comparatively safe. If he had known that I was coming up the river to go on by the post route, he would have waited for me, and we should have gone on together. As it was he bought a camel, and set out for Damascus. He had only been two days out when a party of Arabs came down upon him, and took his money and his arms. A day or two later on another party appeared, and took all that the others had left, excepting the camel and the clothes which the unlucky traveller wore. The guide then missed the way, and went far to the south of the proper track. After wandering about for a couple of days, they fell in with a third set of robbers, who were much disconcerted at finding there was nothing left for them. They asked how people could travel without money or provisions, for the stock of food taken was by this time exhausted, and could with difficulty be made to believe that there

was no trick or concealment in the case, and that other Arabs had been really too quick for them. They proved, however, to be, after all, very reasonable fellows. They held the traveller to ransom, and in consideration of his promise to pay them a sum of money in Damascus, they supplied him and his guide with food, and put them on their right road. They brought him to the encampment of the tribe at Palmyra (which is rarely visited by Europeans, for it is a great haunt of robbers), and treated him very hospitably. The view of Palmyra, Mr. ——— told me, when I met him subsequently in London, compensated for the annoyances and mishaps of the journey, but it was the only sight of any interest on the way, and in ordinary journeys the traveller takes every possible precaution to keep clear of it. When I was in Dr. Colvill's tent, outside Baghdad, discussing the question of rival routes, the particulars of this young gentleman's adventure were not yet known; but the fact that he had been for some time overdue at Damascus, gave rise to considerable anxiety, and much vain working of the Government telegraph which crosses the great Syrian Desert.

There was nothing to be gained, it seemed to me, by taking the trouble to cross that Desert. It was a vast rolling plain, covered at that season with burnt-up grass; and as it would be necessary to give the famous ruins of Palmyra a wide berth, there was absolutely nothing worth seeing until Damascus was reached. The pleasure of visiting that one city would not compensate for the failure of my chief purpose—that of seeing Asiatic

Turkey generally, and forming some opinion of its capabilities and prospects.

But it was different with regard to a suggestion that I should choose the other route and go up the Euphrates in a Turkish steamer, then under orders to proceed to Bir, near Aleppo. The opportunity of steaming up that great river, and seeing whether time had made any changes in the valley through which it flows since General Chesney, some forty years ago, descended it with two little steam vessels, one of which was sunk on the way, was not to be lightly passed by. But when I inquired when the Turkish steamer was to start on her voyage, I learned that she might not set out for a month or six weeks; she had been announced to start a month before, but no one paid much attention to announcements of the kind, for they were never meant seriously: that it was quite possible the voyage might be put off till next year. The Turks have no notion of punctuality in these matters. When the Euphrates steamer is on her way, it is by no means uncommon for the captain to come to an anchor for a week at a time, his passengers getting out and encamping on the tempting sward of the river banks. It need scarcely be said that steam navigation on the Euphrates, conducted in this fashion, does not pay. But from all I could learn, steamers of very light draught could find water enough to go up and down the Euphrates for several months in the year; and if they were managed on business principles—as Messrs. Lynch and Co., for instance, manage the two English

boats plying on the Tigris—the passenger and goods traffic would be found highly remunerative. There are very few towns now along the course of the Euphrates, but there is a large and increasing number of villages, which would soon grow into towns if there were an outlet for the produce of the country.

The uncertainty as to the time of the departure of the little steamer then under orders to proceed to Bir, and the certainty of delays and stoppages on the way, rendered the suggested voyage up the Euphrates to the neighbourhood of Aleppo, practically impossible. I was then advised to get to Europe by turning due east, and going to Teheran along the caravan route to Kermansha. From Teheran to Resht is but two days' distance, and there—if the plague was over—a Russian steamer would be found, and the rest of the journey might be performed without difficulty or fatigue. The caravan route to Teheran, *viâ* Kermansha, is the best of all those leading into the interior of Persia. There is no serious obstacle on the road, the line of hills to be surmounted in getting to the top of the great Persian table-land being very easy in their gradients. A railway to Kermansha, I had been told by English officers, could be made without difficulty, and at small cost, for the engineering difficulties are almost *nil*. Whether it would pay, when made, is not quite so certain, though the traffic between it and Teheran is even now very considerable. The prospect of finding the road *viâ* Kermansha and Teheran much shorter and safer than that to the Mediterranean by Mosul and Diarbekir, did not seem sufficiently

alluring to make me change my plans at the eleventh hour, and I ventured to say so to my friends, who appeared to have a sort of personal ill-will towards the latter route. The Arabs were quarrelling amongst themselves, I was told, and were therefore excited and dangerous; they were robbing people that went incautiously half a mile outside the gates of Baghdad. Farther north the Kurds were giving trouble. It was quite impossible to go with anything like safety.

Seeing so many and such various arguments adduced to prevent my going on to Mosul, and knowing that I had already ordered the chupper horses for the next day, and was provided with letters from his Excellency Kadree Pasha, recommending me to the care of officials *en route*, I laughed, and said that it was my *kismet* —my fate—and that I could not avoid it.

"It is no laughing matter," said the President of the Tribunal of Commerce. "You will find it to be very serious on the way. To-day we had information that the Arabs have looted a village. Three days ago an effendi employed in the government offices was attacked only three hundred yards outside the gates. He was struck on the head, and was so injured that it is thought he will die. The Arabs got clear off with his mare."

"Has no one been arrested?"

"Yes, several; that is a matter of course. But the Arabs who committed the robbery have by this time, no doubt, sold the mare in Persia, and are safe enough. The Persian frontier is scarcely thirty hours from this, and the Arabs can always ride off there with the spoil.

Another effendi was attacked in a similar way only yesterday, and I hear he is dead: at all events, he is not likely to recover, for he was very badly wounded."

"Had neither of these effendis arms? Did they make no resistance?"

"One of them had a revolver, but how could he use it? He was struck suddenly from behind while a couple of Arabs were speaking to him, under pretence of asking their way. He was stunned by blows of knobs of bitumen, formed round the end of short sticks. They are like knobs of iron; the Arab mule-drivers use them to beat their mules and make them go. It would be better for a man to be struck with a sword than with one of them."

"I thought the favourite weapon of the Arab robber is the long spear?"

"Yes, in the desert; but it would not do close to the city. The spear requires room, and its use would attract attention. The Arab is by no means a fool; and though he is audacious enough, he never risks too much. He generally contrives to have the chances in his favour."

"Well," said I, "it may be taken for granted, I suppose, that a European with a revolver may hold his own against a small number of these long-speared gentry, unless he be taken unawares. I understand they have a great dread of European fire-arms?"

"Yes, for they kill at such a distance. But you must not attempt to use your arms if anything like a party of Arabs are coming down upon you. That would be certain destruction. It is much better in that case

to surrender at discretion, and give them whatever they like to take. They rarely kill their victims when no resistance is offered; it is against their religion to take life."

"I intend to travel for the most part by night, so as to avoid the heat of the sun. I suppose that would also have the advantage of enabling me to get along unperceived by Arabs of dishonest intentions?"

"That is by no means certain," said my friend, who seemed to have given a good deal of attention to the dangers of the road. "In this country we always prefer to travel by day, when the sun is not altogether too hot. It is almost impossible to avoid Arabs by travelling at night. They know the most convenient spots for lying in wait, and they attack small caravans unawares, and at a great disadvantage. In the day-time you can see for miles round, and if anything looks suspicious you have some time to make up your mind what to do; you can turn back, or make a run for it. Besides, there is another danger when travelling by night, which is not incurred at all by day. If you come suddenly upon a caravan, your party may be taken for robbers, and fired upon. That often happens. Caravans fire into each other through pure nervousness. Of course, in the daylight accidents of that kind are impossible."

"Then your advice is that I should travel by day and not by night?"

"Yes. The sun is not very hot as yet" (for Baghdad, he meant to say); "no one need fear it in the month of April. When you get a few days to the north, you will

find more inconvenience from the cold than from the heat. The snow is on the Kurdish hills, and the wind blowing over them is very piercing at night. So on the whole it will be better for you to travel by day and not by night."

This piece of advice was by no means welcome to me, for the sun was beginning to be decidedly oppressive during the greater part of the day, and I had intended to take the hint already given me by several Europeans to keep out of its way, and get over the ground in the cool of the night and the early morning. But the dangers of the night seeming, from what I had just heard, to be on the whole greater than those of the day, I modified my programme and resolved to travel when the sun was up.

When these important matters had been duly discussed, word was sent to the Arabs employed under the robber sheik who had us all under his efficient protection, that if they had no objection to sing and dance for their own amusement and for ours, we should be very glad to form an appreciative audience. An answer was sent that in half an hour they would give a performance, assisted by some girls and women from a neighbouring encampment. A concert and ballet were soon organized, and I had an opportunity of seeing how these things are done according to the best traditions of the desert. The young girls began with a sort of overture in a high tremulous note, the first idea of which must have been caught from the prolonged whinnying of a colt in love. The effect was startling, the shrill and savage "shake" piercing the

night air like the shriek of some playful afreet. Then an Arab song was sung in full chorus. There was more variety, or perhaps I should say less monotony, in the air than is usually the case in the songs of Hindostan, but it was not particularly melodious. The "leading ladies," mounted upon the shoulders of the less distinguished songstresses, and standing erect, gave out the upper notes with amazing force of lungs. Their ankles were clasped by the hands of their living pedestals, and being thus secured against the danger of a fall, they swayed their bodies from right to left and from left to right in rhythm, keeping time with the measure of the music, and waving the skirts of their red cloaks. The tall muscular young women on whose shoulders they stood swayed their bodies in unison, and made play with their skirts. When one of the artistes above got fatigued, she jumped down, and her place was taken by one of the others. But it was not easy to tire them; they kept on singing and dancing and waving their draperies as if the exertion was a source of intense enjoyment. The men stood about in a circle, silent, but satisfied; they took no part in the performance.

As there was no moon, it was not easy to see the play of feature and the gestures of the performers, for they stood at a respectful distance from the door of the tent. Dr. Colvill, therefore, wished to invite the whole party into the tent, where there was plenty of light; but the Arab servant, jealous of his master's dignity, would not hear of anything of the kind: "They were low people, mere Arabs; they could not come into the hakim's tent!"

So we had to be satisfied with things as they were. The citizens of Baghdad are not often privileged to witness these unsophisticated Arab entertainments. The Arabs of the desert object to showing off the skill of their wives and daughters for the pleasure of city folk. You must go out to the desert and be on terms of personal friendship with a sheik before such a proof of goodwill is vouchsafed to you. Every girl and woman who sang or danced for our benefit outside the tent was, as Cæsar's wife ought to have been, above suspicion. The mere fact that they were alive was, indeed, tolerably clear evidence of that fact to all who know the customs of the desert.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EN ROUTE FOR MOSUL.

Leave Baghdad *en route* for Mosul—Hours as a measure of distance—Post-horses—The carriage of specie—Want of banking arrangements—The first stage—Jedaidah—A lost dinner—Night in a post station—A rejected suitor's revenge—Yuzaijee—Zaptiehs averse to speed—An adventure with Arabs—A scare and a race—The real use of a zaptieh—Deli-Abbas—Among the hills—Flowers in the corn—Kara Thuppa—Great heat—Danger of sunstroke—Water in the distance—A horse takes a bath—Arabs at the plough—Kuffree—The pilgrim cranes—"Beg! Backsheesh!"

On the 21st of April, at two o'clock in the afternoon, I left Baghdad behind me, and set out for Mosul, a famous city at the head of the navigable waters of the Tigris, close to the site of ancient Nineveh. To get there from Baghdad, the traveller must either buy horses for himself and go northward at the best pace they can keep up,—generally estimated at twenty-five miles a day,—or proceed by chuppur or post, changing horses at intervals more or less considerable. There are a hundred post "hours" between Baghdad and Mosul, the hour being a measure of distance of uncertain length. In some places where the track is good, the hour means five miles: where the track is over mountainous, or difficult country, it is three miles or three miles and a half. In

some parts of the country the word of some Arab of an imaginative turn appears to have been taken as to the distance between places; the hours are of extraordinary length, resembling those miles in the Highlands of Scotland and the less-frequented parts of Ireland, which are popularly said to have been measured out by means of a mad dog and a woollen string. On the other hand, some of the hours, especially near cities, are little more than two miles and a half long. The fixed charge for post horses is three and a half piastres per horse per hour. As I required three, one for myself, one for my servant, and one for the *surajee*[1] or syce, who comes to take care of the other two and see that the traveller does not steal them, I had to pay ten and a half piastres per hour for horseflesh—rather less than two shillings an hour altogether. There are thirteen stations on the route, at each of which you change horses. For the first half of the way the horses are good, but they are very indifferent indeed for the greater part of the remainder.

I had received from the Pasha an official document directing the post contractors to supply me with horses at the rates fixed by Government, but it was by no means certain that proper horses would be always forthcoming. The Government usually renews the supply every twelve months, that being considered quite long enough for any animal to stand the dreadful wear and tear of post life. But owing to the war the fresh horses had not been sent to any of the stations, and there were

[1] The word surajee comes from suraj, the Arabic for saddle.

hardly sufficient in good condition for the transport of the letter-bags. Even at Baghdad I found the contractor very unwilling to let me have the horses I wanted. He started objections, and tried to evade compliance with the requisition. However, three very fair horses were produced, and I paid thirty-two rupees—rather over three pounds—for them, and for the surajees as far as Kara Theppah, thirty-one hours' distance. The contractor had no concern with the post stations beyond, and I was obliged to take cash—Indian rupees and Turkish liras or pounds—to pay for horses, as well as all other expenses of the way as far as Alexandretta. This was obviously very dangerous, the carrying of such a sum being a premium to robbers. I had fifty pounds (Turkish) in gold, and thirty in silver, and it was not easy to stow away so much in safety without attracting notice. I found that bills of exchange or circular notes were unknown throughout the interior. I could not get an order on either Mosul or Diarbekir, both large and busy towns; or even on Alexandretta, which is a seaport, in constant communication with Europe. I therefore stitched the gold up in a waist-belt, and in one or two spare pockets; so that in case of extremity I might be able to produce a little at a time, as ransom money, and not have to give up the whole hoard at once. The want of proper banking accommodation, or, indeed, so far as I could learn, of any banking system whatever, must be a serious hindrance to business throughout the country. It is necessary to carry specie on the backs of mules from place to place to complete commercial trans-

actions, and this is always an expensive and tedious, and often a very hazardous course. In developing the resources of Asiatic Turkey the establishment in all the important towns of a branch of the Ottoman Bank, or some similar institution, would count for a good deal. It would render other steps in the process more easy and economical.[2]

As I made up my mind to travel by day, I thought I might venture to dispense with an escort of zaptiehs, and I set out, accompanied only by Yusef and the surajee. Dr. Colvill rode a couple of miles with me, to see us well into the desert. We gave the city, with its domes and

[2] After my arrival in London I received the following note on this subject from Mr. E. S. Dawes, of the firm of Gray and Dawes, which has done so much for the promotion of commerce in the Persian Gulf, and the contiguous countries:—

"I am sorry to hear you experienced difficulty in getting bills to carry you through Asiatic Turkey. This would not have occurred in Persia, where for several years we have been in the habit of providing government officials and travellers with money at the different places in the interior where it is required, and must see that something is done on the route between Baghdad and Alexandretta.

"The banking facilities in Baghdad, and elsewhere in Asia Minor, are considerable when they are understood; the wealthy Jews and English houses between them arrange matters. There is one joint-stock bank, the Baghdad Banking Company, which has been in existence for several years, but the business it has conducted is of a very trifling character.

"The Hoondee system, so well known and so extensively worked in India, prevails more or less in Persia and Asia Minor, and over a period of thirteen years, during which time we have taken, I may say, thousands of native bills, we have never had one dishonoured, —but of course we have known our men."

minarets, and palm groves, a wide berth, so as to keep clear of the canals and water-courses and ditches, to which its gardens owe their fertility. Going almost due north, we cantered along the broad caravan route across the great level plain, and were soon out of sight of Baghdad, and of the fringe of date-trees marking the course of the Tigris, which here appears to make a bend to the westward. We pushed on for Jedaidah, the first post station, seven hours from Baghdad, and eight from the encampment which was our starting-place. As evening came on we struck once again upon the Tigris; the desert gave way to cultivated fields and rich meadows, and on approaching Jedaidah date-trees became abundant.

We arrived at the mud walls which constituted the chuppur khana (post station or caravanserai) at sundown. It was a miserable place; a mere stable yard, and very different from the well-built caravanserais which I had stopped at when on my journey across Mesopotamia to the Shiah shrines. Religious charity had constructed them, but no one cares for the comfort of people travelling by post on secular business or pleasure. A small parallelogram of dried mud, a foot high and some six feet long by four wide, near the middle of the yard, and looking uncomfortably like an unpretending tomb, was assigned to me as at once my sleeping apartment and my bedstead for the night. When I seated myself on this dismal-looking spot, preparatory to dinner, Yusef opened the saddle-bags and got out the eatables. He placed some of the less necessary things—a tin plate

and a knife and fork—on my right hand, and, unknown to me, for I could not see in the darkness, he placed a cold fowl, the whole of the dinner, at my left. Suddenly there was a snap and a growl; the dinner was gone; a hungry dog had seen his opportunity and profited by it. Some other dogs contested the possession of the fowl with the one that snatched it away so cleverly. There was a fight in the distance, much interchange of canine oaths, and presently a whole tribe of jackals, outside the mud walls, set up a chorus of unearthly shrieks and laughter. I ought to have enjoyed the adventure, but I was dinnerless and depressed. The keeper of the post station had no fowl or eggs, or anything but barley for the horses. I did not yet know that even that was something to feel grateful for. In the emergency I bethought me of some of the tinned soups I had providently purchased in Bombay. I asked Yusef to open one of hotch-potch; in the darkness he opened one of essence of chicken; it was warmed over a couple of lighted sticks, and on it and a piece of bread I supped.

This improvised meal over, I spread my little Persian prayer-carpet, the gift of his Highness the Nawab, over my tomb, and, wrapping my Arab cloak around me, lay me down to sleep. Looking straight up at the stars, so bright and keen in the clear cloudless night, it seemed to me that I resembled in some sort the stone figures reposing on the tops of the tombs in Westminster Abbey, with these differences in their favour, that their beds are of marble, not of mud, that their surroundings are in every way less dubious, and that they have a vaulted roof over

them to keep off the chills of heaven. And thinking so, I fell asleep.

The next morning, at daybreak, we were up and breakfasting on Arab bread and new milk, of which there was no stint. At five o'clock we mounted, and rode through a tolerably cultivated country to Yuzaijee, a station embosomed in date groves. We got over the ground very easily, the post-horses being strong and fast. I had a handsome white mare, which was shorn of an ear. The surajee told us that it had belonged to an Arab sheik, whose only daughter was loved by a youth of no great means or expectations. When he asked the damsel's hand in marriage he was naturally refused, and being of a spiteful turn of mind, he revenged himself one night by cutting off the mare's ear, and disfiguring her for life. The sheik, therefore, sold her to the postal service, the last misfortune that can overtake any four-legged creature in these parts.

The munzil khan, or station, at Yuzaijee was a great improvement on the mere stable-yard at Jedaidah. It is a large yard, with cloisters, in brickwork, around it, in which one can get shelter from the sun by day and the cold dews at night. We halted there for some hours for rest and refreshment, and were then preparing to start, when the man in charge of the place said that the route to Deli-Abbas, which was ten hours' distant, was far from safe, even by day; and he advised me to get a couple of zaptiehs as an escort. I sent Yusef to the governor, or head-man of Yuzaijee, with the official letter from the Pasha of Baghdad, directing all whom

it might concern to provide me with a suitable escort. After a little delay, Yusef came back with one zaptieh, and a message saying that the road was safe, and that one man was sufficient; besides, there was not a second in the station. With the one zaptieh, then, we set out at one o'clock, so as to reach Deli-Abbas before night-fall. We were now going considerably to the east of the Tigris, and were in the open desert; but a line of date-trees far to the right showed where the river Dijala, an affluent of the larger river, flowed towards it from the north-east. I found it very difficult to get the zaptieh to go faster than a walk. The zaptiehs are the owners of the horses they ride, and they have a rooted objection to tiring them, or exposing them to any unusual exertion. The only exception is when they first turn out in the exhilarating morning air, and their spirits being high, they career right and left over the plain, caracolling and showing off in the exuberance of the moment. Having taken a good deal out of their horses in this way, and having worked off their own superfluous energy, they think the "caravan pace," a shuffling walk, quite sufficient for any purpose during the remainder of the day. The only way to overcome in some degree their repugnance to rapid motion is to ride on ahead, and leave them their choice of being left altogether out of sight, or of following you at a respectful distance.

About two hours out from Yuzaijee, the party was in the following order:—I was in front, cantering slowly; the dragoman was some two hundred yards behind me;

the zaptieh was a quarter of a mile behind him; and the surajee, with the baggage, was quite out of sight far in the rear. The sun was very hot, and the grass having almost wholly disappeared from the vast and arid plain, the glare from its yellow surface was very great. Suddenly, as I rode on, I observed a number of extraordinary-looking figures, all striped in white and black, just above the horizon. Through the refraction of the heated air, probably, each figure was apparently elongated until it was twenty feet high. Such preposterously tall and lanky figures are sometimes introduced into the more weird of Gustave Doré's sketches; possibly he, too, had seen human beings stretched out in this fashion in Spain or Africa, and he has accordingly introduced them appropriately enough in his illustrations of the career of the Knight of La Mancha. When I saw these preternaturally long figures quite motionless on the horizon, I was much exercised as to what they could be. It was not very clear, at first, that they were even men. They might be windmills. So I slackened my pace a little, and called out to Yusef, asking him what he thought they were. After a moment's hesitation he said that they were pilgrims; he had not yet forgotten our pilgrimage to Kerbella, and he had pilgrims on the brain. I looked again, and I noticed the line of figures suddenly begin to move towards us. I saw that each had a long spear; I saw, too, that a couple of scouts were coming forward at the gallop, and that from each wing a couple more circled outwards, as if to surround us. I cried out to Yusef, "These are not pilgrims, they

have spears; they are Arabs!" and turned to ask his opinion as to what was best to be done. Then I saw that the whole aspect of affairs behind had suddenly changed with even more magical quickness than that in front. The valiant zaptieh, conspicuous on his white mare, was galloping for dear life in the direction of the Dijala, at right angles to the line of march; Yusef was heading in the same direction at racing pace, and in the far distance I could see the surajee also spurring in the direction the zaptieh was taking. I gave one hasty glance in the direction of the Arabs, and saw that they were rapidly diminishing in height, for they were no longer standing out against the horizon; they were coming rapidly down towards where I was left, abandoned by all my following without even a word of warning. Fortunately my horse, a big bay, was more powerful and had a greater turn of speed than that of either the faithless zaptieh or the dragoman, who had both got so great a start of me. I turned him about and let him have both spurs in a way that sent him after the other runaways flying. The generous steed seemed to have a full consciousness of the situation, and he strode out magnificently, taking some little bushes and low hillocks that came in his way like a hunter. I soon had the satisfaction of seeing that I was overhauling Yusef, and even the zaptieh. I shouted out to the dragoman to ask why he was going to the river instead of back to Yuzaijee? For I was afraid we should be stopped by the river, and then, of course, we should be surrounded and at the mercy of our pursuers. His only answer was, "Hama-

ran robbers! get to the water!" I now looked back, and had the satisfaction of seeing that the Arabs, finding our pace so fast and the odds so great, had given over galloping, and were merely cantering, and they had, indeed, changed their direction. That enabled us to slacken our speed; we had gone about two miles as fast as the horses could go. The zaptieh spied two Arab labourers at work in a field, and he rode to them and asked them some questions.

I interrogated Yusef at the same moment, and asked him how he knew the Arabs from whom we fled were robbers.

"Oh," he answered, "they are the very worst Arabs. They are Hamarans, and they kill people when they rob them!"

"Well," said I, "why did you not tell me that at first, instead of telling me they were pilgrims?"

"I was just going to tell you," said he, "when my horse saw the zaptieh's mare galloping, and it just turned round, and was away with me before I could get a word out!"

Having heard this satisfactory explanation of the cause of the dragoman's sudden flight, I asked what the Arab labourers had to say.

"They say that these people are Osmanlis; they won't rob us!"

"Osmanlis? Why, they have striped Arab cloaks and long spears! They are Arabs! You have just told me they are Hamarans, the worst sort of Arabs."

The two labourers were again cross-examined, and

they stated that the party was composed principally of Hamaran Arabs, but some Osmanlis were amongst them. The Osmanlis were out to collect the sheep tax, and the Hamarans were employed to assist. They could not under the circumstances rob travellers, and we might go on our way in peace.

This statement was very reassuring, and it received some confirmation from the fact that the whole cavalcade went along in the direction from which we had come, and seemed to have no desire to follow us up. Doubtless, it was an impulse of curiosity which impelled some half dozen of them to come towards us at full speed, and thus scare us out of our wits.

I thought I might as well ask the zaptieh, merely for information, whether he considered he had performed the whole duty of an escort when he galloped off at a tangent, on the first appearance of danger, without giving his convoy a word of caution?

"What could three men do against fifty?" said the bold gendarme, replying to my question by another.

"They might, at least, all run away together, and start fair," I suggested; "but so far as you were concerned, you did not give me a chance. You made off, and left me to find out for myself that these men were Hamaran Arabs, and not pilgrims thinking only of saying their prayers. Why did you not call out to me, and tell me to turn and run, when getting out of the way yourself?"

"Ah," said he simply, "there is not a minute to lose when you see Arabs coming. If once they catch you,

there is no getting away; so you must gallop as fast as ever your horse will go without looking about you."

"Well, where are you to gallop to? I did not see that you gained much by making for the river, for you could not cross it, and if these Arabs were robbers, they must have caught us easily when we were stopped by its banks."

I then found that his strategy was not so foolish as it looked. "There was sure to be a village somewhere there," said he, "for there were fields and date groves along the river. Always make for a village when the Arabs are after you; it is the only chance."

"But if the people in the village are Arabs?"

"They are not like the desert Arabs, and they will help you against them. But you must run somewhere; if there is no village, make for a hill; get out of the way somehow."

Thus I learned that the chief use of a zaptieh in a moment of doubt and peril is to show the traveller, by personal example, how to run away, and where to run to.

As we approached Deli-Abbas our way lay across some splendid meadow-land, covered with the richest grass, the greenest we had yet seen; for near Baghdad the herbage was all becoming more or less brown from the growing heat of the sun. But we were now a couple of days' journey to the north. We arrived at the town at seven o'clock in the evening, and found it to be a very unpretending place, built of mud and sun-dried brick, and with a khan of the most miserable kind. It had not even a mud-bank, or "tomb," in the

centre on which to sleep. There was no chopped straw to fill the calico bag, which I fondly hoped to convert into a bed. Some wet grass was littered down to make a couch for me for the night; I covered it over with my Persian carpet, and sat down on it to dine before lying down to sleep. The dinner consisted of a fowl seized at my feet, as it was pecking at a worm wriggling in the grass which had been just thrown down for my accommodation. This time the dogs prowling around were kept at a respectful distance by the free use of the whip, and I dined in peace. The people about informed us that there were "bad Arabs" on the way towards Kara Thuppa and Kuffree, and that it was very dangerous to go on without a strong escort. I was advised to get six men at least; as that number would raise our fighting strength to nine men, all told, we could look robbers in the face. I sent to the head-man of Deli-Abbas, to ask for the suggested escort, and he sent back word that four men—all that were available—should be ready at daybreak next day. That settled, we all—horses and men—lay down, pretty well mixed up together, in the stable-yard, and slept until the first streak of dawn appeared in the east.

On the 23rd April we rose from our beds, or rather litters of wet grass, quite refreshed, and not at all suffering from rheumatism, as might have been apprehended. Breakfast consisted of hard-boiled eggs, harder bread, and milk fresh and warm from the cow. The horses were saddled, and we waited impatiently for the promised zaptiehs. They did not come, however; and I sent to

ask the cause of the delay. The men had to get their horses, I was informed, and they would come as soon as they could. We started at a quarter to six, and were joined by four soldiers about a mile from the town. We then proceeded rapidly enough towards Kara Thuppa, nine hours distant. As the Arabs have a habit of lying in ambush hereabouts behind a projecting ridge, and pouncing on incautious travellers unawares, the zaptiehs wished to get out of this hilly district as quickly as possible, and we raced over the grass nearly the whole way, only slackening our pace at times to rest the horses. The soldiers were well armed with short Enfields and swords; but they seemed particularly anxious not to have to prove the worth of their weapons upon Arabs, and kept a good look-out, one of their number being always well in advance. The rapid motion through the clear morning air was very exhilarating, and the prospect of a brush with Arab marauders, if they turned up in any number less than double our own, or of a doubtful flight, on tired horses, from a stronger body, if the Fates threw it across our path, added zest and interest to the exercise. For a portion of the way we had a range of low sandstone hills on our right hand; the first hills I had seen in Turkish Arabia. Fields of barley were passed at intervals, but they were not very flourishing, depending wholly on the scanty rainfall for necessary moisture. We crossed a range of the hills some two or three hundred feet high, which came out from the rest almost at right angles, and the country began to change its aspect. We had now left the vast level plains,

which had given such monotony to the landscape ever since the Pachumba passed the bar of the Shat-el-Arab. We were among hills and valleys, and in comparatively broken ground. Instead of alternate sand or grass only as a substitute for a road, there was sometimes gravel and sometimes rock to give variety to the sound of the horses' perpetual canter. Another change was that, for the first time, flowers appeared amongst the corn; the farther north we got the greater the number and the brilliancy of the flowers in corn-field and meadow, until in Kurdistan, the ground was enamelled with them, and the fields were often for miles sheets of yellow, and blue, and red, and white of varying shades and wonderful beauty.

We arrived at Kara Thuppa at nine o'clock in the morning. The khan was much better than either of those in which we had been compelled to pass the night, but we only stopped there to rest and change horses. We also changed our four zaptiehs for three others; and at two o'clock in the afternoon we were on our way to Kuffree, which is a place regarded with great suspicion by all travellers, the nomadic Arabs moving about in the vicinity having given it a very bad reputation. The sun was murderously hot during the afternoon, and the horses were much distressed by the heat. They were sorry screws, very inferior to those provided during the first few stages. I found that the very worst of all three provided at the post station of Kara Thuppa had been assigned to me. I therefore stopped the march, and made the surajee dismount and exchange horses, in

spite of his declarations that the one he was riding was so bad that it was not worth anybody's while to put a saddle on him. I found that it was a common trick to try and palm off the worst horse upon an unsuspecting traveller, his servant and the surajee quietly taking the two animals which suit them best. When I got the surajee's horse—a small Arab of wonderful pluck—I was able once more to lead the way, and induce the whole party to push on quickly. We were by this time descending the northern slope of the hills which we had come upon in the morning, and as we came into the plain once more the heat of the sun became quite insupportable. I had my Indian pith hat, but the sun's rays seemed to come through it as if it were a piece of brown paper. I held up an umbrella, but Phœbus Apollo glared through it as if in anger at the endeavour to defeat his fell design of knocking me off the horse with a sunstroke. I felt giddy and sickish, and would have given a good deal for the friendly shade of a tree. But neither tree nor bush is to be seen in any part of this region. We are not yet north of the line which bounds the area of the cultivation of the date-palm, but that tree only grows on the banks of rivers or large streams which are never dry; and there is not a tree of any other kind to be found till we strike the Tigris once more at Mosul. The sole resource was to keep moving as rapidly as possible, so as to get a little breeze by the motion. I asked whether there was any water within reach, and was told that there was a stream four miles farther on. I went as hard as the horse could go to the place indicated; I

found the bed of a stream, but there was no water in it. This was disheartening; but seeing some cattle in a line about two miles farther on, I knew they were drinking at another stream, and I pushed on. When I came to where the cattle were I found a little canal, six or eight feet wide, and three or four feet deep, through which was flowing a stream of mud and water. I bathed my face and hands in the mixture, and felt greatly refreshed by a few mouthfuls of it. One cannot be fastidious on these occasions:—

> "So when the angel of the darker drink
> At last shall find you, by the river brink,
> And offering his cup, invite your Soul
> Forth to your lips to quaff—you must not shrink."

The Persian, Omar Khayyim, doubtless wrote that verse after some similar experience, suggestive of sombre thoughts, eight centuries ago.

I was still on my knees by the side of the canal when a spare horse, on which the baggage had been strapped by the surajee, came galloping up wildly and rushed straight into the water; he too was apparently afraid of sun-stroke. He was no sooner in the middle of the stream than he deliberately laid down in it to have a bath, and rolled over on his back, of course submerging the baggage, and giving it, too, a bath of mud and water. I was afraid that the wretched horse would drown himself in sheer recklessness, and I tried to arouse him to the danger of his position by flogging him with my hunting-whip, but he took no notice of the lash; I pelted him with clods of earth from the bank, but when I hit

him on one side, he calmly turned over on the other. An Arab, who was minding the cattle, ran up, and going into the water, seized the horse by the ear and nose, and gave both a wrench which decided him to finish his luxurious bath, and get up. Then he got out at the other side of the canal, and ran away over some cultivated fields. It took our party, later on, half an hour's hard work to catch him. The spare clothes in the saddle-bags on his back were, of course, saturated with water, and the books and papers ruined by the mud.

A village, inhabited by sedentary Arabs, was at no great distance from the scene of this adventure, and after some persuasion we induced a young woman to milk one of the cows, and supply the party with milk and bread, for which we, as a matter of course, paid. The sun was now declining, and being refreshed and rested, we pushed on to Kuffree, a pretty place, tolerably well built, and of fair size. Date-trees in the gardens around proved that there was plenty of water for irrigation, and the country showed signs of being very fairly cultivated. The Arab labourers seemed to be a little less afraid of exerting themselves when at work in the fields in this region than their brethren farther to the south, where I once saw two men employing their energies on one spade. One man thrust the implement into the not very hard earth, and having done so, he waited till the other, by means of a short rope fastened to the "shoulder" of the spade, raised the spadeful of earth, and enabled the delver to turn it over with the minimum of effort. The ploughing to the south of Baghdad is taken just as

easily, the surface of the rich soil being scarcely stirred. Sometimes a small brambly bush is tied to a donkey's tail, and a couple of broken bricks being laid on it to keep the thorny branches down on the ground, so that they must just scratch it, the animal is driven slowly backwards and forwards until the field is "ploughed." Agriculture as we get towards the north is more serious than this. A plough of some kind is regarded as necessary in all cases, and I have seen three of them carried in the morning to the fields on the back of a mule. The load was not too great, for each plough was made of the branch of a tree, with a wooden projection dexterously fitted to it at an angle made by nature at a point where the ploughshare should be. The soil is everywhere so light that much labour is not required to fit it for the reception of the seed, and so rich that if water be forthcoming a good harvest is a certainty.

The station at Kuffree was a stable-yard pure and simple, and I had to sleep in the middle of it, among the tethered horses. Long before daylight I was awoke by the conjugal discussions in progress between two cranes, which had a colossal nest perched on an angle of the surrounding wall. The nest was composed of as much wood as a mule could well carry, and on the top of the pile the affectionate couple stood each on one leg, making the most extravagant declarations of mutual devotion. These birds are called by the Arabs, "Haji glou-glou," because they make a pilgrimage to southern Arabia—to visit Mecca, of course—every winter; and the words of love which they unceasingly repeat one to

the other, have, to Arab ears, the sound represented by the syllables "glou-glou." They are regarded as in some sort sacred birds, and it is considered very lucky when they build their enormous nests on the house-top or on a mosque. In Mosul, a few days later, I saw a nest on the top of the dome of one of the largest mosques; it replaced the usual crescent, which had been blown down by the wind. The haji glou-glous have legs very long, very thin, and very red, and very long necks and bills. They only use one leg at a time. They clack their bills together like castanets by the hour together, moving their endless necks in wonderful circles the while, in a most eccentric fashion; and they commence this amusing exercise before three in the morning. For food they search the marshes for worms, and, I was told, the streams for fish. When on the wing their long red bills are straight out in front, and their longer red legs are produced in an equally straight line behind, an arrangement which gives them the appearance of being trussed ready for the spit. I had seen numbers of them flying across the Tigris at Baghdad, but it was not until I was awoke by the sound of their elaborate cooing and "billing" on the wall of the munzil khana at Kuffree that I became aware of their many interesting habits.

We started from Kuffree soon after sunrise. Going out of the little street near the munzil khana, a handsome young Arab called to me in a confidential tone, "Beg!"—"Lord!" I turned to see what he wanted, whereupon, with a most insinuating smile, he said, "Beg! Backsheesh!"

The tone in which these two words were uttered, and the winning look which accompanied them, said as plainly as could be, "Why not make yourself and me happy—by giving me a trifle of money?"

The young man was a well-to-do "sedentary" Arab; an Arab of the desert would have taken other and more objectionable means of getting from me a share of my superfluous funds. He had done nothing whatever for me or for the party, yet he proffered his request for backsheesh as if it were the most natural thing in the world that he should ask for it, and I should give it; but he was by no means a mendicant—he simply asked for a favour which it would or might be a pleasure for me to accord. That plausible and kindly applicant for backsheesh is the last of his kind whom we shall see for a long time to come, for we are now entering the country of the Kurds.

APPENDIX A.

HOT SPRINGS AND ALLIGATORS NEAR KURRACHEE.

WITHIN a few miles of Kurrachee are famous hot springs the resort of innumerable alligators deemed sacred by the Natives, which I was very anxious to visit, but time did not allow. An interesting account of the place is given by Lieutenant Careless, of the Indian Navy. He says, "Near the spring I observed what at first sight I took for a shapeless mass of mud, but was warned by the Beloochee not to go near it, as it was an alligator. They told me it was sent by the saint, and that at the temple I should see hundreds more. The monster, which was about twelve feet long, was lying asleep on the grass, and when one of the Beloochee soldiers roused him by heaving a piece of rock at his head, he sprang up in a rage, opened wide his huge jaws, and then sank down again to sleep. I could not but be surprised at seeing the women and children passing and repassing within a few strides of this disgusting-looking brute, and that without fear.

"The temple is on the western side of the valley, surrounded by a thick grove. Before us lay a small swamp, enclosed by a belt of lofty trees, which had evidently been formed by the superfluous waters of the spring flowing into a hollow in the ground. It had numerous small islets formed by channels which intersected each other. These channels were literally swarming with large alligators, and the islets and banks were thickly covered with them also. The swamp is not more than 150 yards long, by about 80 broad, and in this confined space I counted about 200 large ones from eight to fifteen feet long, while those of a smaller size

were innumerable. Our horses were standing within four or five yards of several reclining on the banks, but they took no notice of them, and would not move until roused with a stick. In a small pool apart from the swamp there was a very large one, which the people designated the chief, because he lived by himself and would not allow any other of the common herd to intrude upon his favourite haunt. Although the large alligators frequently came into contact with the buffaloes standing in the water by the bank, they never offered them the least molestation. The natives say they will never touch a buffalo. The appearance of the place altogether, with its green slimy stagnant water, and a mass of these uncouth monsters moving about, is disgusting in the extreme, and will long be remembered by me as the most loathsome spot I have ever beheld.

"We proceeded to the temple, where the priests had spread carpets for the party under the shade of some trees. They said it was a curious sight to see the alligators feed, and that people of rank always gave them a goat for that purpose. Taking the hint, I immediately ordered one to be killed for their entertainment. The animal was slaughtered on the edge of the swamp, and the instant the blood began to flow the water became alive with the brutes, all hastening from different parts towards the spot. In the course of a few minutes, and long before the goat was cut up, upwards of 150 had collected in a mass on the dry bank, waiting, with distended jaws, until their anticipated feast was ready. We stood within three yards of them, and if one more daring than the rest showed any desire to approach nearer, he was beat back by the children with sticks. Indeed, they were so sluggish and tame that I laid hold of one about twelve feet long by his tail, which I took care, however, protruded to a safe distance beyond the mass. When the meat was thrown among them, it proved the signal for a

general battle. Several seized hold of a piece at the same time, and bit, and struggled, and rolled over each other, until almost exhausted with the desperate efforts they made to carry it off. At last all was devoured, and they retired slowly to the water. It was curious to stand by and see such a mass of these unwieldy monsters almost at your feet fighting and tearing each other for their food. They are held sacred by the natives, who number them at 1000. And when the young ones are taken into account, this is by no means exaggerated, for every rivulet a foot wide and a few inches deep teems with them.

"The mosque is a neat building of a square form, surrounded by a broad white terrace, with a cupola and slender minarets at the corners, erected on the summit of a rocky crag of limestone, and is said to be 2000 years old. It is dedicated to Peer Hadjee Munjeh, who is esteemed a saint by both Hindus and Mahommedans, and is held in such high veneration throughout Sindh, that numbers of bodies are yearly brought from a great distance to be interred near this shrine. The valley is covered with burying-grounds, which are full of tombs elaborately carved and ornamented. The interior of the mosque contains a tomb surmounted by a canopy of carved wood-work, supported on slender pillars, the whole being neatly ornamented. On the side of the rock, looking towards the alligators' pool, the perpendicular face of the cliff is covered with a coating of smooth chunam, and from the lower part the principal spring gushes forth through a smooth fissure. The water is received into two stone reservoirs, and then escapes through several outlets to the swamp below. In one of them was a large alligator, with about a dozen young ones, which the inhabitants have named 'the peacock,' and consider it the progenitor of the whole race. The water of this spring is perfectly fresh and warm, but at another, a few yards from it, it is quite cold."

APPENDIX B.

BAHREIN.

THERE are on this island no less than sixteen different clans, all sprung from the Attubee tribe. The sheik is a descendant of Ahmed, who was of that tribe and delivered the island from the oppression of the Persians. Ahmed was not rich in the early part of his life, and carried on a small trade with the Persian coast. Having quarrelled with a man belonging to the Congoon, and killed him, he immediately absconded, and sought refuge in Grane. The Congoon people having found out where he was, threatened the people of Grane to destroy all their boats and kill their men. The Grane people were frightened, and entreated Ahmed to find some other place to live in. He asked them if it was the custom of their forefathers to give up a man after once affording him protection. They replied "No," but still urged him to leave, otherwise their trade would be destroyed. He left, and went to a place called Guttah, about a day's journey on the coast. He had a sum of about 1500 dollars, part of which he invested in the purchase of one or two small boats, and sent them for pearls. He grew rich by degrees, and by his charity to the poor became respected and powerful, they all becoming his followers, and men from other towns flocking to him for protection. After four or five years he built a strong but small fort, and purchased some larger boats, with which he carried on a more extensive trade. He also bought two hundred slaves from Muscat, and furnished them with arms. He had four sons, all of whom married; his followers and

his prosperity increased; so did his power and influence. At that time Bahrein was occupied by the Persians, who used to abuse and strike Ahmed's men whenever they met them. The men complained of this; and Ahmed wrote to the authorities at Bahrein to tell them that he did not know whether they were his friends or foes; but if they would, instead of abusing his people, kill some, he should be able to know and treat them accordingly. Soon afterwards they did kill some of his men, which so enraged his people that they begged him to let them go and take revenge, to which he readily assented. He prepared boats, and, supplying his men with arms, started with them so as to reach Bahrein in the right time. They arrived, and, landing, fell upon the inhabitants, killed a great number, plundered the town, and afterwards returned home. Ahmed, from his share of the plunder, became rich, and was looked upon as a great man. The king of Persia, on hearing of the capture of Bahrein, sent 2000 men with arms and ammunition to punish the men of Guttah. A battle was fought between them and Ahmed's followers, and the Persians were defeated. After this battle, Ahmed and his followers went to Bahrein to settle: he had gained the hearts of his followers, and they unanimously elected him their sheik.

APPENDIX C.

THE DEATH OF HUSSEIN.

Sir Lewis Pelly, when resident in the Persian Gulf, wrote in a despatch to the Bombay Government, with reference to a play in which the fate of Hussein is set forth, "There is not in the present day a single opera or tragedy in Europe, that produces one half the effect upon the audience that the tragedy of Hassan Hussein produces upon a Persian audience."

I had myself an opportunity last year, during the Mohurrum, of witnessing in Bombay the performance of this miracle-play, and nothing could exceed the intensity of the grief which the representation of the fall of Hussein, at Kerbella, elicited amongst the Shiah Mahometans present. Indeed, the Shias are so wrought upon on the recurrence of this anniversary every Mohurrum, that, by a police order, the celebration is restricted to the limits of certain extensive grounds, and "the procession of the horses," carrying the blood-stained body of the martyr and his little children, is not permitted to pass through the streets, where a conflict with the Sunnis would be inevitable. The following description of the play, as I saw it performed in Bombay last year, may be of interest:—

On Thursday evening, January 25th, 1877, I heard quite by chance that a very interesting ceremony was to take place at the Imaum Barra, a place of assembly of the Shia or Persian sect in the native town. Proceeding to the spot I found a stream of Mussulmans, with some Hindus of the lower orders, entering an enclosure, of which a

number of police guarded the gates. Two or three Persians stood amongst the police, and at times interfered to prevent the ingress of men of the Sunni or orthodox sect, of whose self-control on such an occasion they might not unnaturally entertain a doubt. But Hindus were allowed to pass without difficulty, and so were Christians. A Persian gentleman leads us up a flight of steps to a sort of gallery running along one side of a not very large compound. A house closes in another side of the quadrangle; at the windows are groups of Moslema ladies, closely veiled, looking down at the scene below. There are lamps in profusion all around; the place is lighted *à giorno*. On the narrow gallery where we stand are a few ladies and one or two sahebs; several Hindus of the middle class; the Jam of Jamkhandee; and several Persians. In the quadrangle is a dense mass of people, all Mussulmans apparently. Presently a double row of mourners somehow become apparent in the midst of the moving crowd, and the beating of the breast begins. The blows are given in unison with the open hand and with amazing force. It is difficult to understand how such violent percussion over the region of the lungs and heart can be continued with anything like impunity for a length of time. We ask a very liberal-minded Mussulman standing next us how the mourners can stand such blows continuously inflicted at the rate of three or four a minute for an indefinite time? "Ah," he replies, "they sometimes die of it: very likely there are some of them lying on the ground now. They have been at it before, and a number of people always faint or hurt themselves on these occasions. They are esteemed lucky—they think themselves it makes them holy to become sick through all this violence, which has really nothing whatever to do with our religion." The men go on beating themselves more and more violently and keep step as they do so. Their fanati-

cism visibly grows every instant. They move their heads and bodies to and fro, wildly ejaculating, "Ah! Hussein! Hussein Shah! Oh! Hussein, King Hussein!" This cry, or rather wail, "Ah! Hussein! Hussein Shah!" varies in its note every instant, and inflames the whole assembly. The noise of the blows dealt with the regularity of the stroke of steam machinery forms a sort of deep bass to this maddening shriek. Some of the mourners leave off beating their breasts, and rain blows frantically on their bare heads. The fierce intensity of the passions at work makes a deep impression on you as you look down at the scene, and you begin to see how terrible a thing religious fanaticism when thoroughly roused really is, and how tremendous is the force which it is capable of exerting in shaping the destinies of the world. These hundreds of muscular healthy men in the prime of life—many of them as fair as Europeans—work themselves into a perfect fury of devotion and beat their breasts till they become as raw beef. One man beat a way through his skin until the red and bleeding flesh came through, and then he continued to beat that. This went on for ten minutes, for twenty, for half an hour; the men moved slowly, step by step, in a circle, round the compound, beating their breasts and their heads and weeping aloud, and shouting, "Ah! Hussein! Hussein Shah!" until one began to feel that Hussein, who was slain twelve centuries ago, was a victim whose blood was still fresh, and whose fate claimed an active sympathy. There is something contagious in so much fervour. It is certain that I began to feel an interest in Hussein that I never dreamed of taking when I set out for the Imaum Barra an hour before. Judge what the effect of such a commemoration must be upon the Shias themselves! The most sensational of American Revival meetings are but child's play to it.

While this paroxysm of grief was at its highest, a great stir became perceptible in the crowd. Through the opposite doorway came men bearing on their heads large metal trays covered with little clay lamps. Every wick was alight and fluttered in the still and stifling air as the bearers moved along. The two circles of mourners moved apart from one another, and thereby made a lane through which the lamps are borne at the head of the procession which followed close. First came a number of horses carrying boys representing the children and nephews of Hussein carried off prisoners by their accursed enemies. The little fellows were from six to eight years of age, and wounds from which flowed rivers of blood were painted with realistic effect on their faces and necks. Their white clothes were draggled with blood. The horses which they bestrode were covered with housings, on which gore was sprinkled with hideous effect. Around each horse was a group of half-naked men beating their breasts in real anguish ; tears streamed from their eyes, and they shrieked, "Ah ! Hussein !" in a way that thrilled the nerves of all who heard them. The on-lookers wept and sobbed aloud. But a more dreadful sight was to come. A bier on which lay extended the body of the slain Hussein was brought slowly along. His son sat upon the bier, and every moment bent down and embraced the body, of which the form could be seen with ghastly distinctness through the bloody shroud that covered without hiding it. Imagine the effect of this harrowing spectacle upon the excited crowd ! The mourners beat their breasts, jumping a foot high from the ground at every shriek of "Ah ! Hussein ! Hussein Shah !" One thing surprises me. When the son stoops down and flings his arms round the corpse, the corpse returns the caress by putting its arms round the boy's neck. Corpses, as a rule, do not return caresses in this way, but miracles

do sometimes occur, and this I presume is one of them. The corpse moves past, and close behind it comes a litter on which are the sister and widow of Hussein. They throw dust and straw upon their heads, and add to the general aspect of woe which is tearing the heart out of all true Shias present. The women past, the horses with the bleeding children come round again. We have time to see that they are beating their little heads with their small hands, and throw dust—handed to them by the men around—over their hair and clothes. One of the horses has a score of arrows—too symmetrically arranged—sticking in the white housings which cover him. Blood issues from every arrow wound. Two beautiful white doves sit with the devoted son upon the corpse of Hussein, their wings are bedraggled with blood. If there was a want of water, there was no want of blood, when the unhappy Hussein came to his untimely end.

How did Hussein come by his death? How came that death to make an impression upon the imagination of a great section of the followers of Mohammed which no other ever made? Fatima, the mother of Hussein, was the daughter of Mohammed. She was married to Ali, the Prophet's companion and favourite, and of course it was natural that she should expect that Ali would be her father's successor as head of the Faithful. But the Prophet's young wife, Ayesha, had other views. Her father, Abubekr, as a matter of fact, succeeded her husband, and not Ali, the husband of Fatima. Abubekr was succeeded by Omar, and Omar by Osman. When Osman died, Fatima's husband, the illustrious Ali, became Caliph. He was assassinated at Kufa, A.D. 660. He left behind him two sons, Hassan and Hussein, whom their grandfather had himself termed "the foremost among the youth of Paradise." Hassan renounced his rights to prevent civil

war. This did not save him from being poisoned nine years after by Yezid the reigning tyrant. Twenty years later Hussein, who had retired to Medina, was invited to return by the subjects of another Yezid, and listening to the invitation was slain in battle at Kerbala in Arabia. After seeing the Procession of the Horses defile out of the Imaum Barra and pass through the compound of the Persian Consul's bungalow, I accepted an invitation from a son of his Highness Aga Khan, the chief of the Khoja community, to go on Friday morning to the Khoja Jumat Khana to see the whole tragedy re-enacted before our eyes. The Jumat Khana in question, the place of assembly of the Khoja caste, is a large building, surrounding on all sides a large oblong piece of ground, in which grows a fine banyan-tree. The lower floors of the building open into the great quadrangle, and the verandahs form spacious galleries looking down upon it. These galleries were crammed with the wives and mothers and little children of the Khojah Mohammedans, and very gay they looked in their many-coloured garments. In the great space below, the Khojahs and their guests sit upon the ground, or on little platforms. To screen the assembly from the sun an awning was spread, by means of ropes over the whole space. Under one of the galleries was a platform appropriated to Persians. Next it was a smaller one for European spectators. In front of the platform set apart for Persians, a small space, some thirty feet long by twenty feet wide, was roped off from the rest of the ground. This was to serve as a stage. On one side within the ropes were seats for his Highness Aga Khan and his family. On a dais was a large arm-chair for whom no occupant presented himself until the play began. A similar dais was at the further end; and upon a third, just opposite, was spread a mattras with a pillow. An attendant having come in and poured

from a basket in two little heaps a quantity of what looked like chopped straw, the whole of the stage preparations were complete.

The thousands of spectators sat on the ground or in the verandahs and waited cheerfully for the commencement of the play. Coffee was carried round in large kettles, and those who had the providence to bring goblets were freely helped. The hubbub and the cheerfulness of the audience could have been matched on a boxing night in a London theatre before the Pantomime begins. There was no sign of sorrow; not a sob; not even a tear. All these were to come.

Suddenly there is a great shout, and we see that a little procession has made its way from the left and is entering the roped-off space. At its head is a very fine man, fully six feet high, of fair complexion. His black beard is cut loose. He walks with dignity, and is evidently a great personage. He is Hussein himself. The turban of green and gold, which he wears as if it were a crown, denotes his relationship to the prophet. A capacious black cloak envelopes his heroic figure. Behind him come his sister and his wife—both veiled to the eyes, so that if it were not for their height, and a certain firmness in the stride, one could not tell that they are not really of the sex they assume to be. After the two ladies come four little children. Then come attendants. Hussein at once proceeds to the little dais on the right and seats himself in the vacant chair already mentioned. His family seat themselves on the dais at the other end, and when they had done so—lo! there is a sick youth, the son of Hussein, lying on the mattrass, and very sick he looks. His prototype was suffering from illness at the time of his father's death, but he lived to become the progenitor of all the Sayids now scattered over the East.

No sooner had Hussein taken his seat on the chair—he sat in it European fashion—than to him enters the villain of the piece: a frightful miscreant in jack-boots, into the tops of which are thrust the ends of a pair of capacious red trowsers—such as Zouaves wear. Everybody could see that this miscreant came for no good, and what he said—in excellent Persian delivered in a clear manly voice—the audience could scarcely bring itself to listen to. When he had spoken, and drawn a sword, which he flourished in a way familiar to stage villains all over the world, the noble Hussein intoned a reply, of which every word was drunk in with avidity by the Persians on the platform at our right. There were murmurs of approval as it seemed to me. After a long colloquy the villain Shamer departs, after proffering help when he intended treachery. Then up rose Hussein's sister, and besought him not to go forth to certain destruction. Hussein answers that he is called to be Imaum or Leader of the Faithful, and that call he must not disobey. If he be slain, he will die for the People of the True Faith; if he live—he will do God's will. Thereupon the hapless sister, foreseeing his doom, cries aloud and flings dust and straw, out of little heaps, upon her head. The audience begin to be affected. Agha Khan's son, who stands barefooted within the roped-off space, cries bitterly; others do the same. The sister, flinging herself on Hussein's neck, beseeches him to stay. He embraces her tenderly, but declares that he will go and die for the sins of all. Sobs break forth on all sides. Everything is enacted with such earnestness, the intonations are so distinct and expressive, and the gestures so simple and direct, that even those who do not understand a word of Persian can form a good idea of the general tenour of the dialogue. Not that the acting is finished or artistic in our sense. All the *dramatis personæ* have their parts written out in their

hands and refer to them without hesitation when memory halts.

The sister having failed to influence the doomed martyr's determination, his little daughter comes forward, and tries what entreaties and caresses can do. The whole audience weep, the Persians sob aloud. The scene is really affecting. The child itself weeps in good earnest. Hussein takes it in his arms, soothes it, and puts it back in its mother's lap. Hussein's wife, it may be worth noting, does nothing to supplement the endeavours of the sister and little daughter. Hussein goes over to his son's bed, seats himself on it, and bids him a tender adieu. By this time the audience is in agony of sympathetic grief; there are sobs in abundance on our left. Whoever weeps for Hussein obtains pardon for his transgressions. Was it not for the good of the Faithful that Hussein died? Had he wished he might have destroyed his perfidious enemies utterly; he preferred to die, and those who mourn for him are dear to God.

Hussein having taken leave of his family—not forgetting his silent wife—a splendid horse is led in. The saddle and bridle are, somewhat strangely, of English fashion and make. The sister procures a quantity of white linen, and tearing it for a yard or so down the middle, converts it into a shroud, and puts it on Hussein. His fate is certain if he goes forth; but go he will, for it is his duty to do so. He is about to mount his horse, when his little daughter rushes from her mother's arms and catches him by his cloak. He sinks on the ground, and wraps the child in a long embrace. When he is rising the child pulls the shroud off him suddenly, and covers herself with it as she stretches herself on the ground. He takes it from her, and having put it on again mounts his horse. The child flings herself in front of the horse's hoofs, and the animal cannot move. An attendant takes the child up; she breaks away and

clings to the horse's legs; her little hands actually clutch its hoofs. This creates spasms of grief among the audience. An angel comes on the scene—mercifully hiding the dazzling radiance of his countenance behind a veil—and offers as the friend and "Obeyer" of Ali to fight and destroy the enemies of Hussein. But Hussein has devoted himself to death and refuses the angel's proffered aid. The heavenly messenger casts dust upon his head upon learning the fixed resolve of Hussein to die. This angel was a very energetic warlike angel indeed, and could easily have made good his offer. He wielded a splendid sword, and wore a pair of top-boots which would have become the best cavalry officer this world has ever seen. We do not often, even in our dreams, see angels in top-boots. But then angels' visits are few and far between, and we do not often see them in any kind of costume.

When the angel had left, and all the leave-takings were concluded, and Hussein, dressed in his shroud, had drawn his scimitar, and was ready to ride forth to meet death, the villain of the piece reappeared once more upon the scene. This time he had a buckler upon his left arm, and was attended by a small force. After a parley Hussein rode towards him, and he and all on the stage moved off. The treachery and the battle, the want of water and the thirst which must be allayed at all cost—the whole of the fifth act of the tragedy—are left to the imagination. But if we are not shown the martyr's death we are shown the dismal procession of his captive children, and sister and widow; his headless corse upon a bier. The "Procession of Horses" which we had seen the evening before at the Imaum Barra now again passes before our eyes, heavy with weeping. Again the mourners beat their breasts, and the cry of "Ya Ali! Ya! Hussein! Hussein Shah!" rends our ears. But the beating of the breasts and the wail of

"Ya! Hussein!" lack something of the wild fanaticism of the previous night. There is more measure and cadence in both the blows and the cries. The mourners are labouring under emotion of a very real kind, there is no doubt of that; but they are no longer beside themselves with grief and indignation. Still even with that allowance there was still a great deal of religious exaltation amongst those men. It is to be hoped that as time goes on, and the influence of education makes itself felt amongst the Shia as amongst the orthodox Mussulmans, the mourning for the death of one of "the foremost among the youth of Paradise," will find other modes of expression. At the Imaum Barra I saw one of the men who yielded so unreservedly to the enthusiasm of grief, lying stretched out at length in a verandah, to all appearance stone dead. He may not have been dead; the supposition was that he, like others, had dropped down insensible from the result of self-inflicted blows. No one went near him to aid him if he needed aid. If he had fainted in such a cause, he was happy; if he had died mourning for Hussein, he was still happier.

APPENDIX D.

I.

Statement showing the Division of the Province of Turkish Arabia into Districts, Sub-Districts, and Dependencies.

Districts of Governors (Mutserifiic).	Sub-Districts. Governed by Lieut.-Governors (Kaimakams).	Dependencies. Governed by Officers subordinate to Lieut.-Governors (Mudirliks).
Baghdad. — Governor-General (Wali Pasha) .	Khoraisan	Shahruban.
		Khalis.
		Bakoobah.
	Khanakeen ..	Binkoodreh.
		Cuzulrebat.
	Mendeli.	
	Koot	Bedra.
	Samurrah	Tekrit.
		Dujeil.
	Azizieh.	
	Kazimain.	
	Deleym	Hit.
		Kobeysah.
		Romadieh.
		Suglawieh.
	Anah	El Kayim.
		Haditheb.
		Joobla and Aloos.
Mosul.—Governor or Mutserif	Amadiyeh	Dawoodieh.
		Prawri Bala.
		Prawri Zir.
		Rikan.
		Yezweh.
	Zako.	
	Acra.	
	Dahock	Muzoori.
	.. .. ..	Melha.
		Altoon Koopri.
		Tooz Khormati.
		Shewan.
Shahrizoor (Kerkook).—Governor or Mutserif..	Ruvandooz.. ..	Dera Harir.
		Baluk.
		Coosh Tappah.
	Selahiyeh (Kifri) ..	Dawoodiyeh.
		Cara Tappah.

Districts of Governors (Mutsrific).	Sub-Districts. Governed by Lieut.-Governors (Kaimakams).	Dependencies. Governed by Officers subordinate to Lieut.-Governors (Mudirliks).
Shahrizoor (Kerkook).—Governor or Mutserif. .	Arbil .. .. Koi Sanjak. Runiyeh.	Sultaniyeh. Coosh Tappah.
	.. .. ..	Zargos.
	Goolumber	Cazaljeh. Seroojik.
Sulimaniyeh. — Governor or Mutserif	Caradak	Sungah. Zenyanah.
	Bazian.	
	Markah	Soordash. Peshdar.
	Shahr Bazar. Jaaf Tribe.	
Bussorah. — Governor-General (Wali).. ..	.. .. ..	Abool Kassif. Fao. Zobeyr.
	Gorna.	
	.. .. ..	Midhutiyeh.
	Kerbella	Musaïb. Shafatieh. Rahaliyeh.
	Hindiyeh	Kifl. Towerij.
	Samawah	El Boojwerir.
Hillah.—Mutserif ..	Nejeff.	
	Shamiyeh	Midhutiyeh. Shenafiyeh.
	Divaniyeh	Daghara. El-boo Deyr.
	Amara	Ali Ghurbee. Ali el Shurji. Zobeyr. Tafrah. Shatreh.
Montefik.—Sheik, or head of Arabs	.. .. ..	Wasit. Shatreh. Jubellah.
	Sook esh Shiookh.	
El-Hassa.—Mutserif ..	.. .. ..	Moobriz. Jaffer. Ojeir.
	Catif. Gutter.	

II.

Statement showing the Number of Male Adults of the Population of the whole Province of Turkish Arabia.

Districts.	Settled.				Nomad.			Houses & Tents, &c.	Total Male Adults.
	Mohammedans.	Christians.	Jews.	Sabians.	Mohammedans.	Christians.	Yezedis		
Town of *Baghdad* and Dependencies ...	47,464	1,324	9,618	...	3,100	...	...	18,696	61,506
District of Khoraisan...	16,660	...	90	...	12,000	...	...	7,450	28,750
Khanakin ...	5,204	...	137	...	2,075	...	...	2,349	7,416
Mendeli ...	5,854	...	93	...	2,238	...	...	2,685	8,185
Samurrah ...	5,682	...	15	...	7,576	...	...	3,502	13,273
Azizieh ...	...	...	...	...	41,680	...	...	6,455	41,680
Kauzemein..	4,039	...	...	...	5,000	...	...	2,512	9,039
Deleym ...	5,000	...	50	...	45,000	...	...	11,010	50,050
Anah ...	5,468	...	121	...	661	...	...	2,452	6,250
	95,371	1,324	10,124		119,330			57,111	226,149
Town of *Mosul* and Dependencies	17,915	3,594	911	...	51,838	13,370	1000	27,462	88,628
District of Amadieh ...	12,934	2,900	561	...	...	...	...	6,650	16,395
Dahok ...	14,644	874	631	...	...	...	...	6,127	16,149
Zako ...	7,060	1,350	436	...	...	...	...	3,295	8,846
Akra ...	13,924	575	779	...	...	...	...	15,412	15,278
	66,477	9,293	3,318		51,838	13,370	1000	58,946	145,296
Shahrizoor.									
District of Kerkook ...	31,111	228	442	...	12,900	...	...	14,429	44,681
Selahieh (Kifra) ...	10,781	...	105	...	...	...	...	3,483	10,886
Arbil ...	12,050	362	477	...	3,400	...	...	4,403	16,289
Koi Senjik...	9,567	330	215	...	...	...	...	3,509	10,112
Ravandooz .	24,188	...	724	...	2,670	...	...	8,646	27,582
Raniyeh ...	11,960	...	...	...	5,550	...	...	4,800	17,510
	99,657	920	1,963		24,520			39,270	127,060
Sulimaniyeh.									
District of Sulimaniyeh	19,000	180	650	...	22,500	...	...	4,872	22,330
Goolumber..	25,000	...	250	...	...	...	...	5,050	25,250
Shahbazar ..	17,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,000	17,000
Caradagh ...	20,000	...	650	...	...	...	...	4,136	20,650
Merkeh ...	11,500	...	60	...	...	...	...	2,312	11,560
Bazian ...	8,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,600	8,000
	100,500	180	1,610		22,500			23,570	124,790
Bussorah.									
District of Bussorah ...	25,474	74	92	...	...	...	...	10,033	25,640
Gorna ...	15,860	...	5	150	1,250	...	...	5,051	17,265
Scattered...	20,000	...	...	...	...	...	...	4,000	20,000
	61,334	74	97	150	1,250			19,084	62,905
Hillah, Diwaniyeh, Samawah, Shamiyeh, Kerbella, Hindiyeh, and Nejeff	50,000	...	1,000	...	649,000	...	...	100,000	700,000
Amarah and Dependencies...	2,500	50	410	860	253,510	..	...	50,065	257,330
Montefig, Nasseriyeh, and Soog-i-Shiookh .	30,000	...	60	210	269,730	...	...	50,000	300,000
El Hassa, Hafoof, Katif, and Gutter	17,619	...	...	...	15,000	...	...	9,065	32,619
Grand Total ...	523,458	11,841	18,582	1220	1,406,678	13,370	1000	407,111	1,976,149

III.

List of Tithes and Taxes levied in the Province of Turkish Arabia.

TITHES.

On produce of lands irrigated by canals, $\frac{1}{3}$rd of produce.

On produce of lands watered by labour, $\frac{1}{10}$th of produce.

On produce of marsh lands or lands that have been flooded by rise of river, $\frac{1}{6}$th of produce.

On produce of gardens.—Fruit-trees, watered from river by artificial irrigation, by hides (buckets), $\frac{5}{40}$ piastre per tree. Date-trees, watered as above, $1\frac{1}{4}$ piastres per tree. Summer crops and vegetables, watered as above, $\frac{1}{10}$th of produce. Fruit-trees, &c., irrigated by canals, $\frac{1}{10}$th of estimated value of produce. Date-trees, &c., irrigated by canals, 2 piastres per tree.

On produce of lands, overflowed by the river, or have been flooded, $\frac{1}{5}$th of produce.

On rice cultivation, $\frac{1}{2}$ of produce.

TAXES.

Poll Tax, termed the Khaneh, on the settled Arab tribes, 50 piastres per man per annum.

Sheep Tax, Aghnam, $2\frac{1}{2}$ piastres per sheep per annum.

Kassab Khaneh, Slaughter House,
- On entry into town, in two classes, 5 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ piastres per sheep.
- Camel, 15 piastres per head
- Buffalo, 15 piastres per head.
- Bullock, 10 piastres per head.

Gold and silver manufactures taxed $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem.*

Tanneries—$2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem.*

Mujusseh.—Lime and brick kilns, pottery, glass foundry, 10 per cent. *ad valorem.*

Duties on spirits.—20 per cent. on distillation.

Jamoosiyeh.—Tax on buffalo, 10 piastres per head per annum; varies up to 17 piastres.

Khums-i-Hattab.—$\frac{1}{5}$th levied on value of firewood.

Fees on Government contracts, private contracts, passports, stamped paper, license taxes, taxes on building and repairs, are levied *en regie.*

Tobacco Tax.—Turkish produce, 12 piastres per oke of $2\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.

Salt.—In Baghdad, 1 piastre per oke; outside, 25 paras per oke.

Dukakiyeh.—Glazing piece goods, manufactured at Baghdad, 15 paras per piece.

Tamghah.—General stamp on articles of local manufacture of all descriptions, levied at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Tahmis.—A tax on coffee, roasted for the public coffee-houses, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem.*

Ihtisab, or Octroi, levied on entry into town:

Wheat and barley, at rates ranging from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ piastres per load.

Wheat and barley, by rafts from below Tekrit, at $12\frac{1}{2}$ piastres per Taghar of 2690 lbs.

Wheat and barley, by rafts from above Tekrit, 8 per cent. internal consumption duty.

Vegetables and melon, according to distance, from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ piastre per load.

Fresh fruits, cheese, milk, &c., 10 per cent. *ad valorem.*

Resm-i-Jisr.—Bridge Tolls, viz.:—

1 piastre per laden camel, horse, or mule. } Unladen, $\frac{1}{4}$
$\frac{1}{2}$ piastre per donkey-load. } piastre each.

5 piastres per Takht-i-rewan, or horse-palanquin.

2 piastres per Muhfeh.

$\frac{2}{40}$ piastre per sheep.

$1\frac{1}{4}$ piastres on corpses.

Opening bridges for passage of boats and rafts, from 10 to 2½ piastres per craft, according to size.

Meyden.—Tax on the sale of horses and baggage cattle, 2½ per cent. paid by the seller.

Delaliyeh. – 2¼ per cent. on sale of landed property, minus ½ per cent. to the crier.

Wezn-i-Hurreer.—Monopoly of weighing silk :—

8 piastres per bundle.

8 piastres per bundle on Cuz, raw silk, 3¾ piastres per bundle.

8 piastres on Luz; inferior silk, 2½ piastres per bundle.

Tax on Hides for drawing water at following rates :—

To a distance of 4 miles from Baghdad, 35 piastres per hide per annum.

North and south of this limit on either side, each hide 135 and 625 piastres respectively.

In the Dileim District of the Euphrates at 200 piastres per hide.

Rafts that float down on skins are taxed at ½ piastre per each inflated skin.

Juftaneh.—Tax on Ploughs is levied in some districts at the rate of 100 piastres per plough, and labourers in gardens are subject to a Capitation Tax in some districts at 75 piastres each man.

Mills for grinding corn pay 150 piastres annually.

Wuzanieh—A tax on weighing grain is levied in some parts at 3 piastres per ton.

Tax on Wood for fuel is levied at 5 piastres per ton in lieu of ½ Khums-i-Hattab.

100 piastres, equal 1 Turkish pound.

10⅞ piastres, equal 1 rupee, or two shillings.

IV.

Receipts and Disbursements of the Revenue of the Vilayet of Baghdad and Bussorah, for the year 12[illegible]=1874, A.D.

RECEIPTS.

Nature of Revenue.	Purses.	Turkish pounds.
Poll Tax on settled inhabitants and Arabs	10,906	54,530
Redemption-money from Conscription	1,033	5,165
Tithes on cultivation . . .	85,471	427,355
Tax on sheep and arrears . . .	13,392	66,960
Tax on buffalo	497	2,485
Miscellaneous	18,388	91,940
	129,687	648,435

Exclusive of customs estimated at £150,000.

EXPENDITURE.

Nature of Expenditure.	Purses.	Turkish pounds.
Internal administration . . .	42,161	210,805
Revenue do. . . .	10,702	53,510
Judicial do. . . .	3,458	17,290
Educational do. . . .	201	1,005
Beneficial do. . . .	654	3,270
	57,176	285,880

The Military, Marine, Oman, Idareh, and Telegraph Expenditure is included in the above.

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